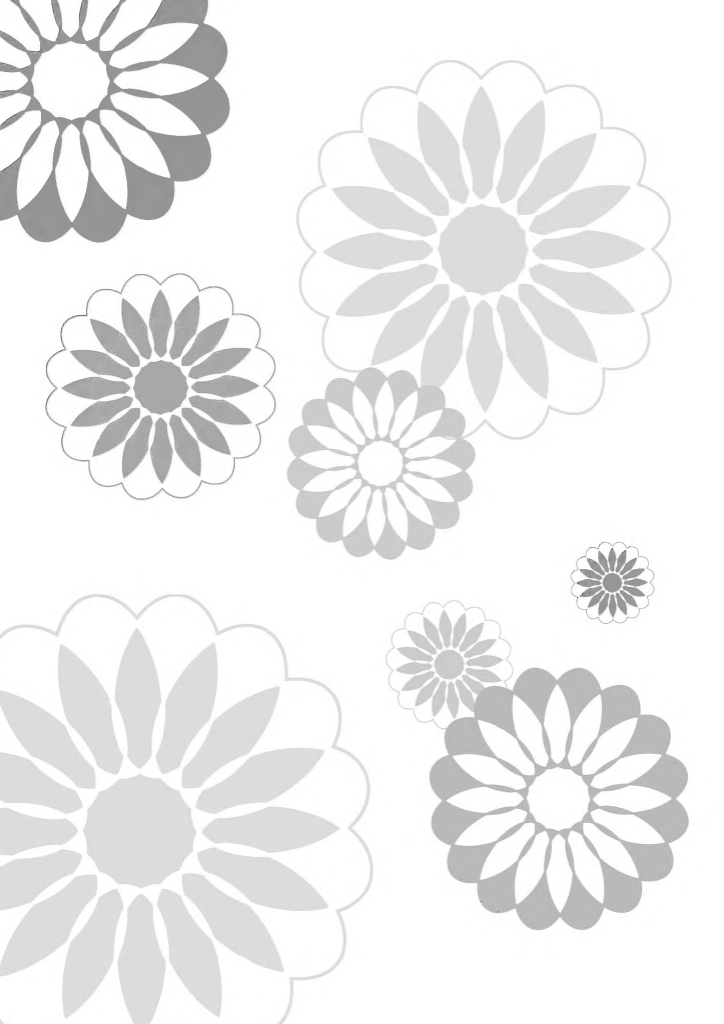
Oh My Goddess!

ああ女神さまっ

27

藤島康介

KOSUKE FUJISHIMA



Oh My Goddess!

ああっ女神さまっ 27

STORY AND ART BY
Kosuke Fujishima

TRANSLATION BY
Dana Lewis AND
Christopher Lewis

LETTERING AND TOUCH-UP BY
Susie Lee AND Betty Dong
WITH Tom2K

DARK HORSE MANGA™

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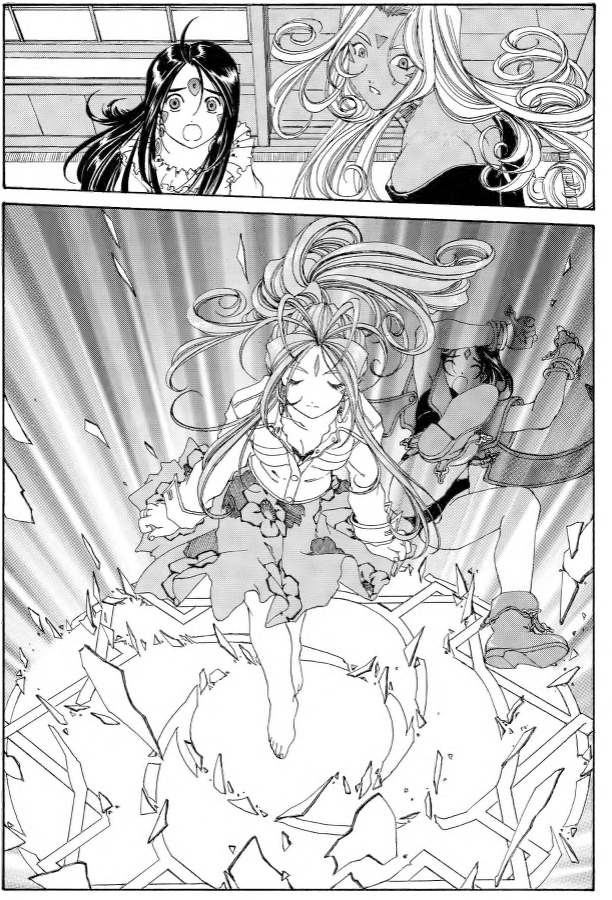
CHAPTER 170

The Great Earth Search

AAAH!!
COME ON, SKULD!
HUH?!
BUT YOU SAID I DIDN'T HAVE TO DO ANY-THING--!!
DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND THE SITUATION WE'RE IN...?



SHE BROKE THE SEAL SPELL ALREADY?!
NO WAY!!
FWA-A
gasp!!

KEIICHI !!
WHOA-- THAT WAS SCARY.
HER SILENCE IS THE SCARIEST THING ABOUT HER.
SHE COULDN'T HAVE CARED LESS ABOUT US, THOUGH.

TRACK-ING DEVICE?
THE TRACKING DEVICE YOU BUILT TO FIND KEIICHI ...?
um... SEE WHAT?
SO.... LET'S SEE IT.
TRACER ?!
THE TRACER YOU PLANTED ON HIM JUST IN CASE...?
OF COURSE IT WORKS !!
BECAUSE THEY'RE WAY GONE BY NOW.
SORRY, SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO OFFEND. IT DOESN'T WORK, RIGHT?

...WELL, SHE KNEW HOW TO PLAY THAT...
...BUT I GUESS I KNOW HOW TO BE PLAYED TOO.
VVVnnn
ENGAGE!
SEARCH...
SEARCH RADIUS *MEDIUM*-- 50 TO 2000 METERS!
INJECTOR *ACTIVATED!*
MAIN CHAMBER PRESSURE *RISING!*

HOW FAR COULD THEY HAVE GONE?
200 TO 1200 km... STILL ?!
RESET RANGE! 2 TO 200 km!
MAYBE THEY'RE FAR-THER AWAY ...?
um...
OUT OF RANGE.
BUT THAT'S NOT...
NOPE. NOTHING. ZIP.
NOTHING LEFT BUT A "ROLLER SHIFT."
"ROLLER SHIFT"?
MM-HMM. THE RECEPTION RANGE OF THIS MICRO DETECTOR IS AP-PROX-I-MATE-LY...
...500 km.

...THE EARTH'S DIAMETER BEING *40,000 km*, AS YOU KNOW.

...WE CAN THEREFORE SEARCH THE *ENTIRE HEMISPHERE*...

$500\times40=40000\times\frac{1}{2}$

...SETTING *HERE* AS OUR BASE POINT, AND MAINTAINING A *4.5 DEGREE* ANGLE BETWEEN DETECTORS...

THEREFORE, WITH *FORTY* OF THESE...

BASE POINT

$4.5^{\circ}\times40=180^{\circ}$

...IT'S *ALSO* ABLE TO SEARCH AN AREA 500 km *ACROSS*.

NOW, SINCE IT CAN SEARCH AN ARC 60 DEGREES AHEAD...

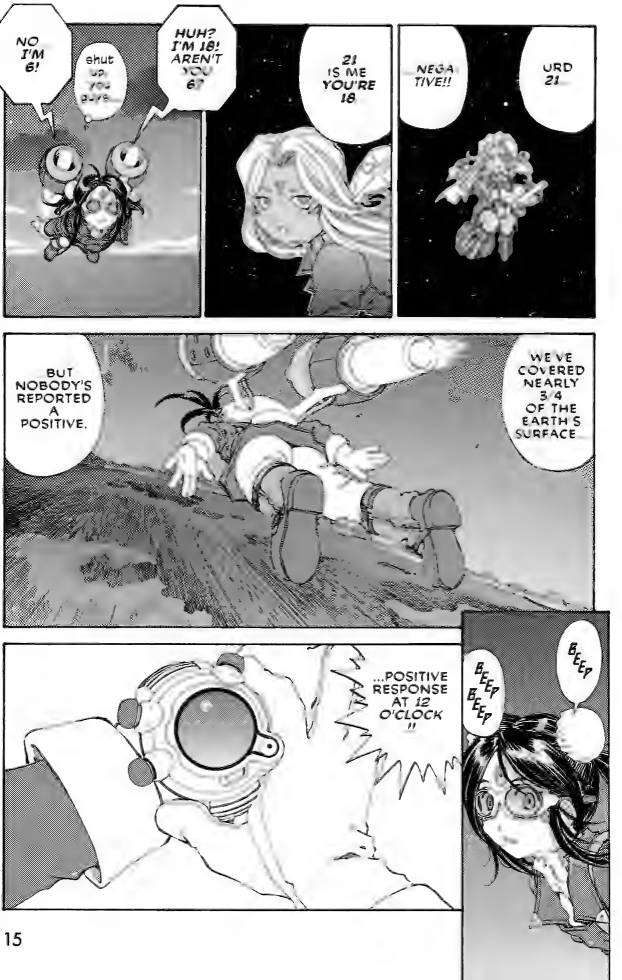
500km

AND *THEN* ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS SWITCH TO THE *OTHER SIDE*, AND WE COVER THE *ENTIRE PLANET!!*

I DUB THIS "*OPERATION... TANUKI HOLE SMOKE-OUT*"!!

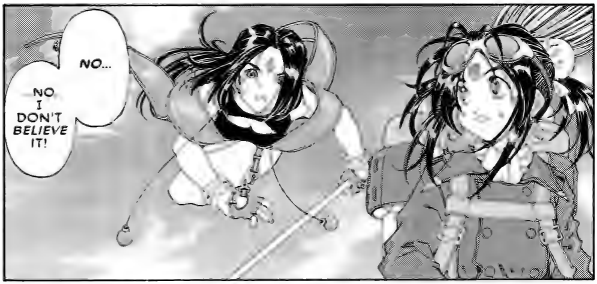
...AND LOTS OF YOU.
YES, MISS PEORTH?
EXCUSEZ-MOI.
"TANUKI HOLE"?
WRONG! WE'VE GOT...
1...
2...
WE APPEAR TO BE DRASTICALLY UNDER-STAFFED FOR A GLOBE-SPANNING PROJECT OF THIS NATURE.
WHRRRRM
LET'S GO!

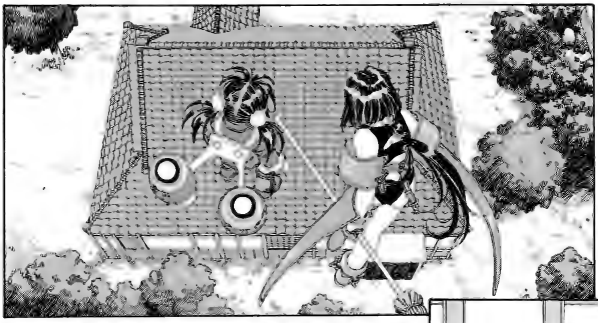
WHOOSH
SKULD...
NEGATIVE
!!
PEORTH...
NEGATIVE
!!
URD 1...
NEGATIVE
!!


NO I'M 6!
shut up, you guys
HUH? I'M 18! AREN'T YOU 6?
21 IS ME YOU'RE 18
NEGA TIVE!!
URD 21
BUT NOBODY'S REPORTED A POSITIVE.
WE'VE COVERED NEARLY 3/4 OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE
...POSITIVE RESPONSE AT 12 O'CLOCK
BEEEP
BEEEP BEEEP

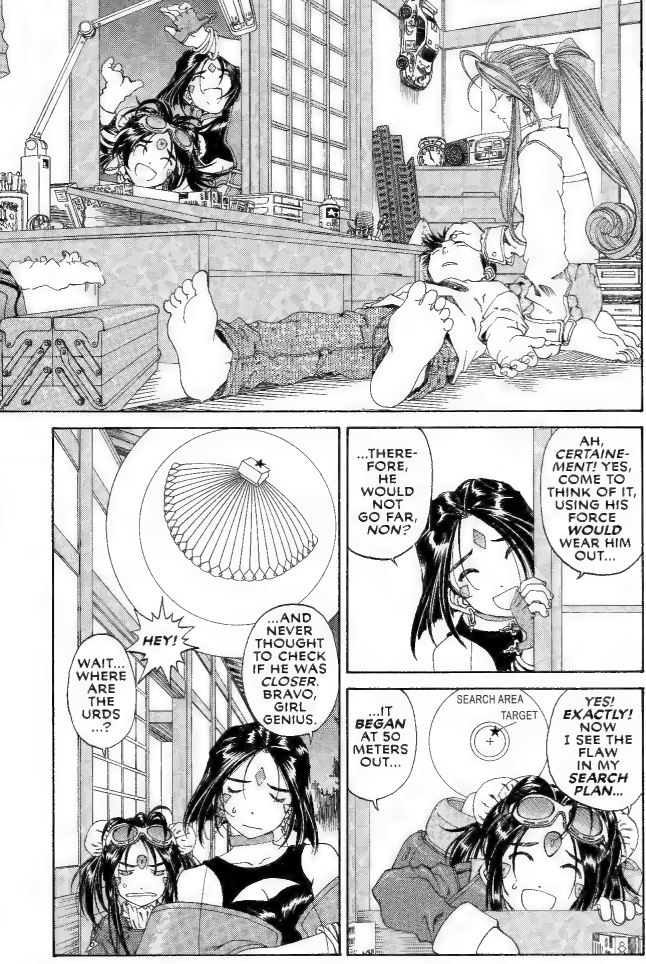
AFTER-BURNER ON!!
FRONT SCREEN... FULL MODE!!
klik
URD 8, POSITIVE!!
URD 12, POSITIVE!!
URD 3, CONTACT!!
HEY WAIT A MINUTE...
FEORTH TARGET CONFIRMED !!
HM...
...COULD THEY HAVE FOUND THE TRACER AND SENT OUT A LOAD OF DECOYS ...?
WHOOM

SHOOM-
HUH...
DIRECTLY BELOW ?!

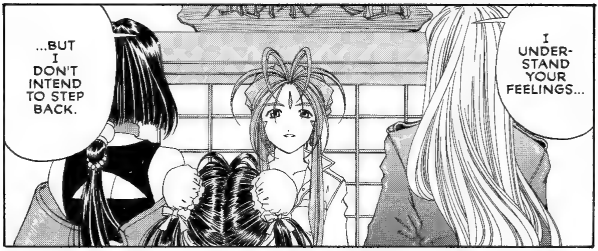

NO...
NO. I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

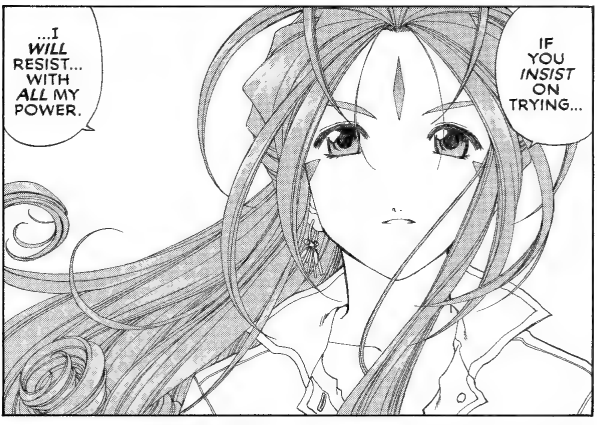


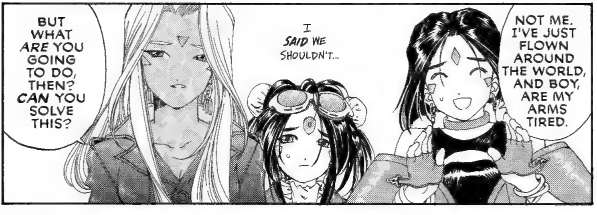
mass surveillance

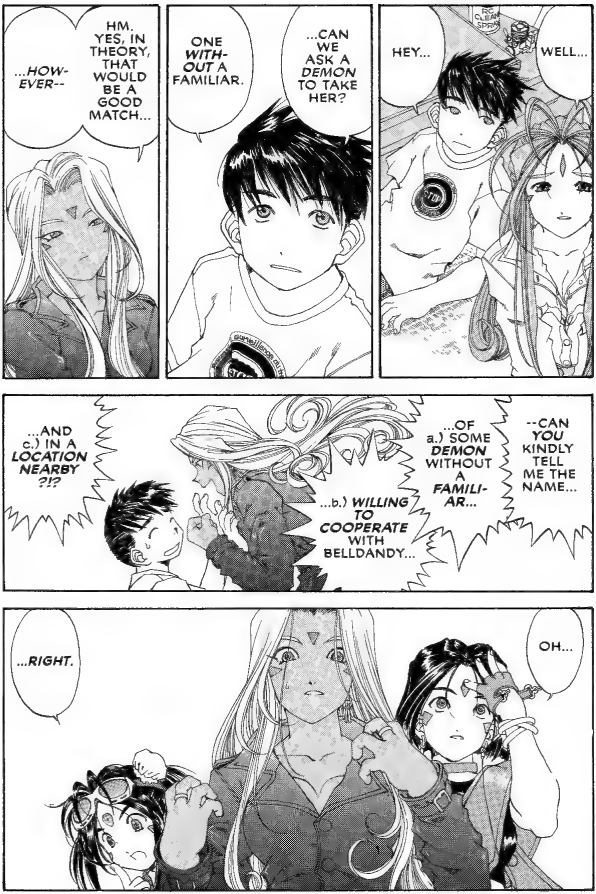

AH, CERTAINEMENT! YES, COME TO THINK OF IT, USING HIS FORCE WOULD WEAR HIM OUT...
...THEREFORE, HE WOULD NOT GO FAR, NON?
YES! EXACTLY! NOW I SEE THE FLAW IN MY SEARCH PLAN...
SEARCH AREA
TARGET
...IT BEGAN AT 50 METERS OUT...
...AND NEVER THOUGHT TO CHECK IF HE WAS CLOSER. BRAVO, GIRL GENIUS.
HEY!
WAIT... WHERE ARE THE URDS ...?

LET'S STOP NOW.
JUST A FEW SECONDS BEHIND.


I UNDER-STAND YOUR FEELINGS...
...BUT I DON'T INTEND TO STEP BACK.


IF YOU *INSIST* ON TRYING...
...I ***WILL*** RESIST... WITH ***ALL*** MY POWER.

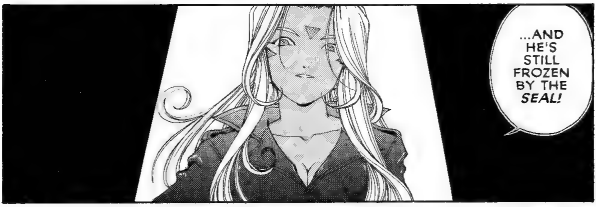

NOT ME. I'VE JUST FLOWN AROUND THE WORLD, AND BOY, ARE MY ARMS TIRED.
I ***SAID*** WE SHOULDN'T...
BUT WHAT ***ARE*** YOU GOING TO DO, THEN? ***CAN*** YOU SOLVE THIS?

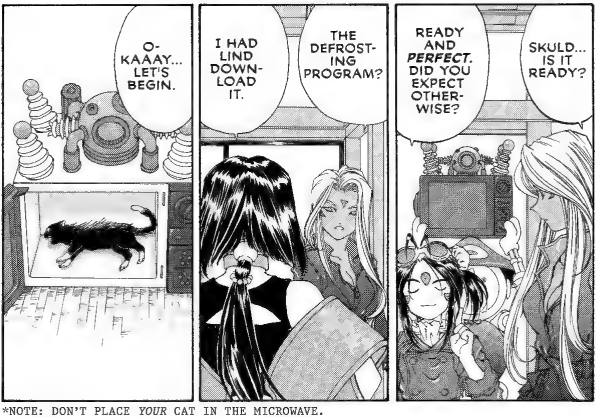

HM. YES, IN THEORY, THAT WOULD BE A GOOD MATCH...
...HOW-EVER--
ONE WITH-OUT A FAMILIAR.
...CAN WE ASK A DEMON TO TAKE HER?
HEY...
WELL...
--CAN YOU KINDLY TELL ME THE NAME...
...OF a.) SOME DEMON WITHOUT A FAMILI-AR...
...b.) WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH BELLDANDY...
...AND c.) IN A LOCATION NEARBY ?!?
OH...
...RIGHT.

CHAPTER 171

Kiss Me Goodbye

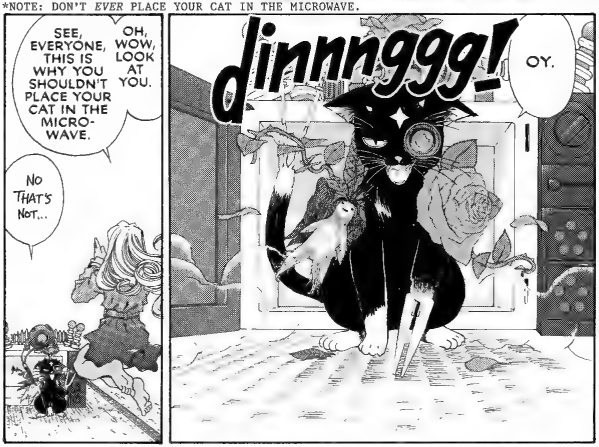
GET ME GODDESS FIRST-CLASS, SPECIAL DUTIES, LIMITED, LIND, PLEASE...
...REQUEST-ING TRANSFER OF DATA...
A DEMON WILLING TO COOPER-ATE WITH BELL-DANDY
PROB-ABLY WITHOUT A FAMILIAR...
HOW STUPID
SIGE! MY ELECTRON GUN!!
BANPEI! PULL OUT THE MAGNETRON GENERATOR!
BREEP
SKRRK
HE WAS RIGHT NEARBY ALL THE TIME...




O-KAAAY... LET'S BEGIN.
I HAD LIND DOWN-LOAD IT.
THE DEFROST-ING PROGRAM?
READY AND *PERFECT.* DID YOU EXPECT OTHER-WISE?
SKULD... IS IT READY?

*NOTE: DON'T PLACE *YOUR* CAT IN THE MICROWAVE.

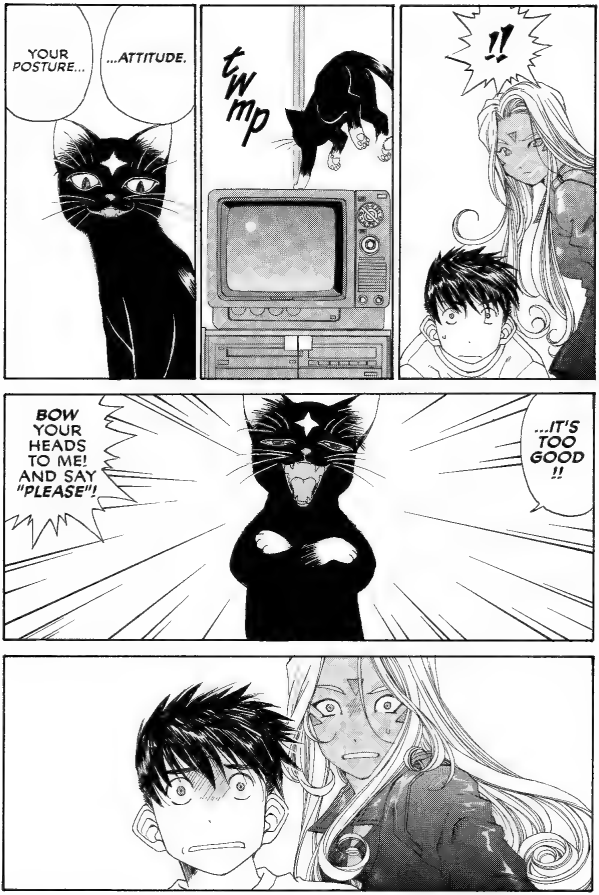
*NOTE: DON'T *EVER* PLACE YOUR CAT IN THE MICROWAVE.



SO... THAT'S THE SITUA-TION.
HOW ABOUT IT? CAN YOU GIVE US A HAND?
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MORTAL MIND?!
WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU GUYS...
...WHEN YOU LEFT ME TO SUFFER THAT...THAT SPIRITUAL FREEZER BURN?!
WE'LL, YOU'VE GOT A POINT... BUT...
flop
LOOK, IF I COULD SOLVE THIS MYSELF, I WOULD...
...AND I REALLY DON'T WANT TO ASK YOU FOR HELP.

I MEAN, IF YOU HELPED OUT...
STILL, IT'S A SHAME.
I'M THE ONE THAT SHOULD PROTECT HER.
...SURELY, BELLDANDY WOULD BE SO GRATEFUL.

HER LIPS... MOVING GENTLY TO...
YES, *IMAGINE* HER TENDER EMBRACE OF JOY.
huh?
chump
LISTEN... I'M NOT RULING ANYTHING *OUT*...
...BUT IT *ALL DEPENDS*... ON YOUR...


YOUR POSTURE...
...ATTITUDE.
tWmp
!!
BOW YOUR HEADS TO ME! AND SAY "PLEASE"!
...IT'S TOO GOOD !!

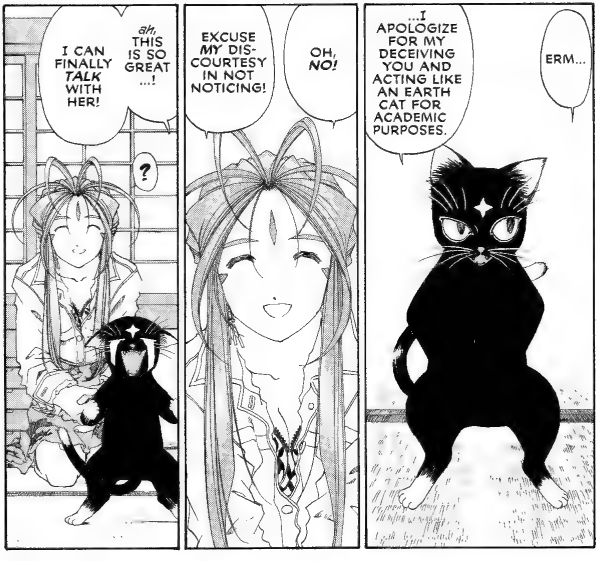
AND YOU DARE CALL ME "ELDER SISTER" ...?
ELDER SISTER! RESTRAIN YOUR ANGER!
ffssh
YOU DARE TELL ME TO BOW MY HEAD?!
AND WORSE... SAY "PLEASE"?!
PLEASE!
huh?
KHOOMP!!
SHHWAPP

AND YET... THERE IS A PROBLEM.
HM... YES, YES, THAT'S MORE LIKE IT.
HMMM... IT HAS ITS USES.
...
PLEASE HELP US!!
HMMM... WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THAT...?
....
...YOU HAVE TO REVEAL MY IDENTITY.
IN ORDER TO GIVE ME THE FAMILI-AR...
OH... YEAH!
DON'T PLAY DUMB.
WHAT?

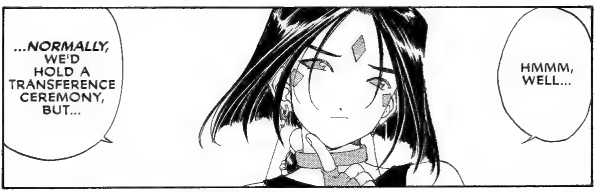
WERE YOU PLANNING TO KEEP ME DOWN ON THE FLOOR FOREVER ?!
...AND WHY ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT TELLING BELLDANDY ...?
...HUH?
LOOK...
...YOU'VE BEEN WITH HER A LONG TIME. JUST WATCH AND SEE.
UM...

...YES! A DEMON CAT! HERE TO...uh... STUDY EARTH CATS!
YES. HARUMPH. TO OUR AMAZEMENT, VELSPER TURNS OUT TO BE....
KEICHI'S SHOP
...SHE SAID SHE'D BE DELIGHTED... BECAUSE IT TURNED OUT HE...I MEAN, SHE... NEEDS A FAMILIAR!
SO WHEN I TOLD HI... UM, HER, OUR PROBLEM...
STOP
AREN'T YOU LAYING IT ON A BIT THICK?
EVEN I FEEL SICK.
...GOOD-NESS.
...

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.


I CAN FINALLY *TALK* WITH HER!
Oh, THIS IS SO GREAT ...!
?
EXCUSE *MY* DIS-COURTESY IN NOT NOTICING!
OH, *NO!*
...I APOLOGIZE FOR MY DECEIVING YOU AND ACTING LIKE AN EARTH CAT FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES.
ERM...

...WHAT DO WE DO *NOW* ...?
SO...

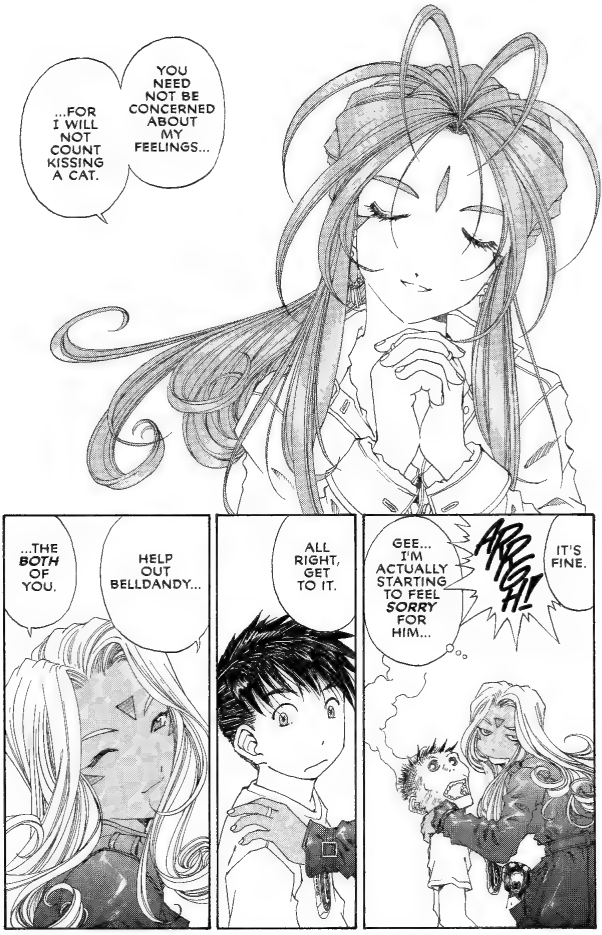

...*NORMALLY*, WE'D HOLD A TRANSFERENCE CEREMONY, BUT...
HMMM, WELL...

...THAT WON'T WORK.
...SINCE KEIICHI CAN'T *CONTROL* THE EX-FAMILIAR...

BUT THE MOST *EFFECTIVE* METHOD IS TO...
UNDER THE CIRCUM-STANCES, TRANSFERENCE BY DIRECT CONTACT IS MOST SUITABLE.

ISN'T IT, IN TRUTH... THE ONLY OPTION...?
...KISS?!
UM... RIGHT.
RIGHT?
REVENGE? ME? IT'S JUST THE SIMPLE TRUTH.
IS THIS YOUR REVENGE FOR YOUR HEAD BEING POUNDED INTO THE TATAMI?
LIAR! BLASPHEMER!
...NO, IT CAN'T BE...
NO...

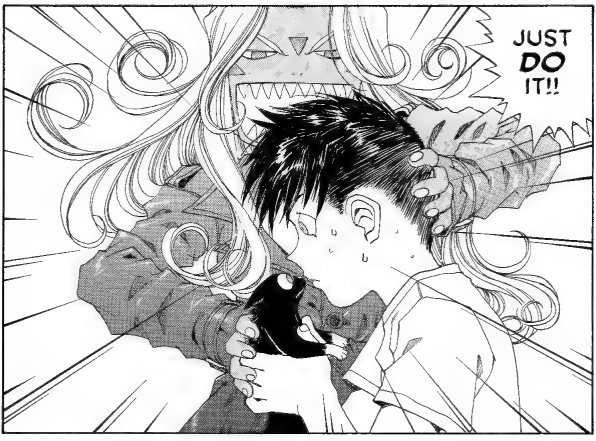
...ISN'T VELSPER A GIRL CAT?
SET ASIDE THE FACT THAT YOU ARE BOTH MALE.
DEAL WITH IT, YOU TWO.
huh?
...DON'T BE NERVOUS, KEIICHI...
AND DON'T WORRY.
YEAH! WHAT ARE YOU SO NERVOUS ABOUT, KEIICHI?!
OH, YEAH, RIGHT!! HA HA HA!


YOU NEED NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT MY FEELINGS...
...FOR I WILL NOT COUNT KISSING A CAT.
IT'S FINE.
ARGH!
GEE... I'M ACTUALLY STARTING TO FEEL SORRY FOR HIM...
ALL RIGHT, GET TO IT.
HELP OUT BELLDANDY...
...THE BOTH OF YOU.

URD...
GOOD LUCK.
...DO I REALLY ?!
DO I...

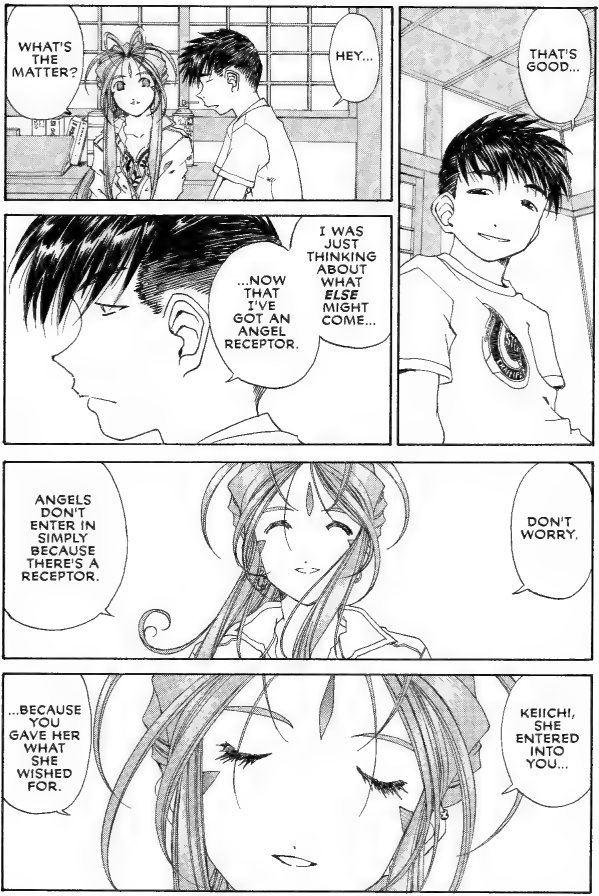
HEY. CLOSE YOUR EYES.
YOU FIRST, BUDDY.
mmmm
groan
...ON SO MANY DIFFERENT LEVELS!!!
NO! IT'S WRONG...

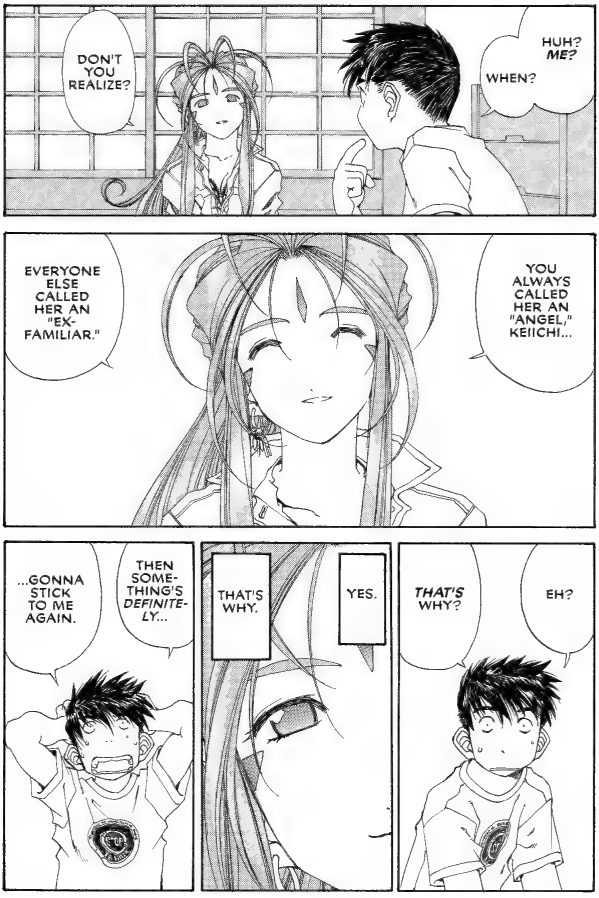
NO, I CAN'T THROW AWAY MY FEELINGS. THERE ARE THINGS IN THIS WORLD THAT WE MUSTN'T THROW AWAY. BESIDES, IF EVERYONE JUST THREW AWAY EVERYTHING THEY WANTED TO, THE WORLD WOULD BE FILLED WITH GARBAGE AND WOULD END RIGHT THERE, ALONG WITH MY PRIDE AS A DEMON AS GONE AS A CANCELED TV SHOW.
YES, I MUST CAST AWAY EVERY-THING AND...
NO, I HAVE TO, TO HELP BELL-DANDY...


JUST DO IT!!

IT'S OKAY. DON'T WORRY...
A NAME...
...I COULDN'T GIVE YOU THAT.

KEIICHI...
THE ANGEL ...?
EVERY-THING'S OKAY.
SHE'S SAFELY TRANS-FERRED TO VELSPER.


WHAT'S THE MATTER?
HEY...
THAT'S GOOD...
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT WHAT *ELSE* MIGHT COME...
...NOW THAT I'VE GOT AN ANGEL RECEPTOR.
DON'T WORRY.
ANGELS DON'T ENTER IN SIMPLY BECAUSE THERE'S A RECEPTOR.
KEIICHI, SHE ENTERED INTO YOU...
...BECAUSE YOU GAVE HER WHAT SHE WISHED FOR.


DON'T YOU REALIZE?
HUH? *ME?*
WHEN?
EVERYONE ELSE CALLED HER AN "EX-FAMILIAR."
YOU ALWAYS CALLED HER AN "ANGEL," KEIICHI...
...GONNA STICK TO ME AGAIN.
THEN SOME-THING'S *DEFINITE-LY*...
THAT'S WHY.
YES.
THAT'S WHY?
EH?

BECAUSE IT'S SO NATURAL FOR YOU...
...YOU DON'T EVEN NOTICE.
YAA!

WHAT...
...THE HELL... uh, HECK?!
HMM. VERY INTERESTING.
THEY MUST BE SIDE EFFECTS FROM HER TURNING HALF ANGEL

WHAT?
IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOUR... ATTITUDE.
HM.
DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!
...AND SAY...
BOW YOUR HEAD TO ME...
...BUT I WON'T SAY I'M NOT PLEASED.
HM. I DIDN'T DO IT...
...YOU...
WHY...
fffsshh

CHAPTER 172

Shoot or Die!

plik
THERE!

YAAY!!
ONE SLOT LEFT...
...THE BATTLE'S ALREADY BEEN DECIDED.
snarl
AHH... SUCH HAPPI-NESSS.
NOT YET.
THE SOUL SEEKING VICTORY... CALLS FORTH MIRACLES.

THE CHANCE BECOMES ZERO... ONLY WHEN YOU GIVE UP!!
COME TO ME... MY MIRACLE !!
WHAT? IT'S ALREADY ZERO.
PLIK
KSSH
POING
BOOM!
gaa

-SER...
ahh... such happi-ness.
IO-SER...
IO-SER...
IO-
...
♫
OWWW
FWAP
...

um...
WOOSH
...hmm
...should
I pretend
it didn't
happen...?
SO...
YA
WANNA
FIGHT,
EH,
PILGRIM?

MY FIVE-ROUND HANDGUN... SPITS *ELASTIC DEATH!!*
I'M PACKING *TWELVE* LOOPS... OF *TWANGY OBLIVION!*

FWAP FWAP FWAP
THE TWO OF YOU...
tWipp!
tWipp!
...OFF GUARD!
...O-KAAAAY.
NONE OF THEM EVEN TOUCHED HER.
...NO FIGHTING, OKAY?
WHISH
FWAP
WHISH

...
WHY, YOU--
FWAPP
FWAPP
FWAPP
ho ho ho!
QUELLE FLAVEUR... QUELLE SENSATION...
AHH...
PWIPP!
PWIPP

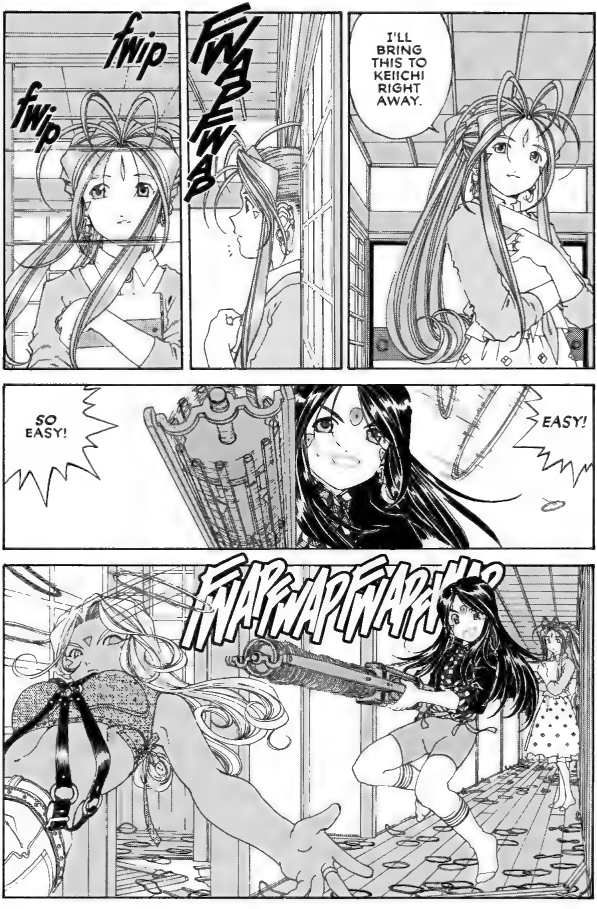
...GANGIN' UP ON ME, 'EH?
OH...
WELL, IT'S A GOOD THING I BROUGHT PLENTY OF BARRELS !!!
VRRUMMM !!

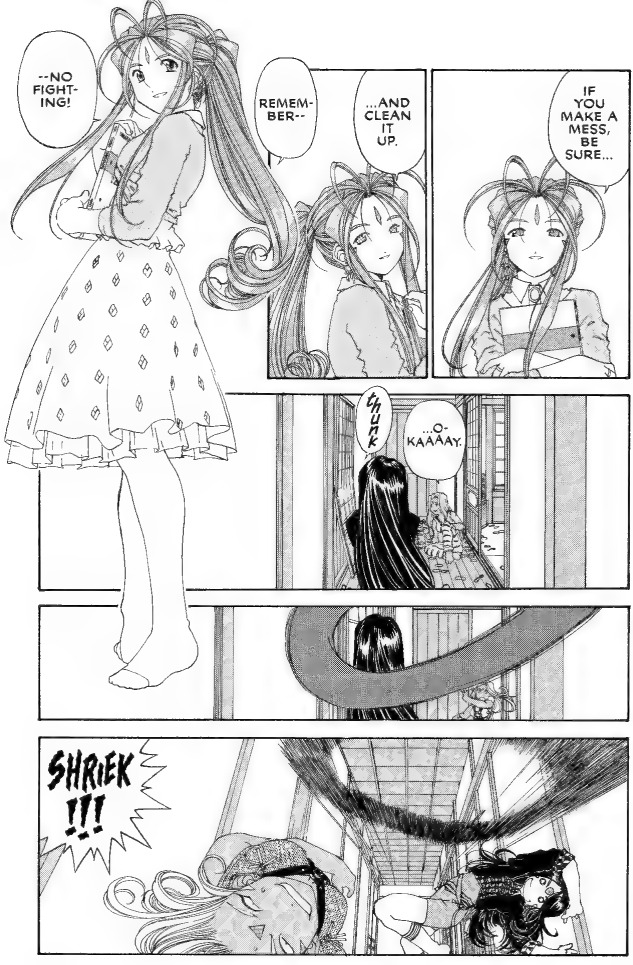
FWAPFWAP
FWAP
THIS WON'T DO!
OW! OWW!
FWIP FWAP
FWIP FWAP
AHH...
FWIP FWAP
THMP THMP FWAPFWAP

HEY-- LET ME GET BEHIND YOU A SEC.
huh?
THUD
KRASH
SNAP SNAP SNAP SNAP
EEEEK!

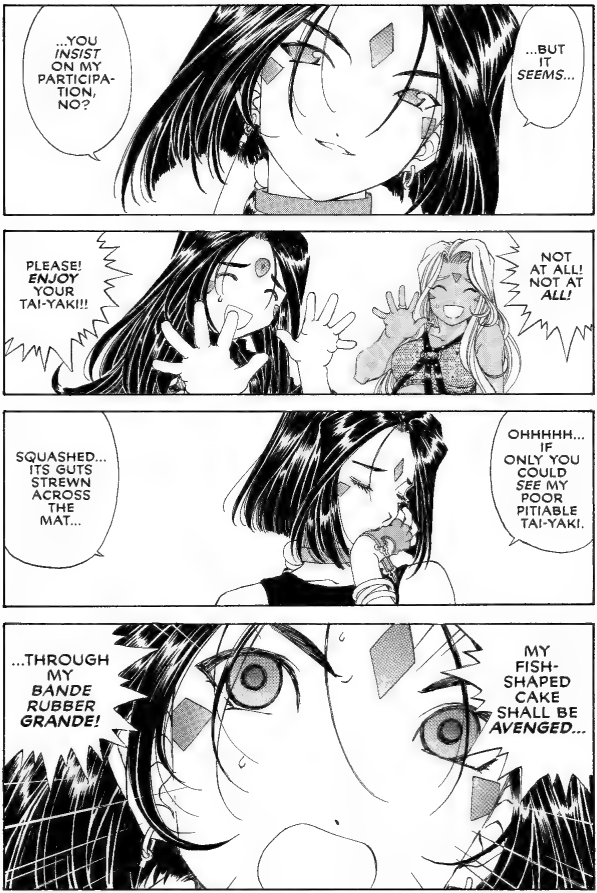
FWAP FWAP FWAP
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE, URD!!
...WHAT HAVE THOSE FOOLS DONE...?
OWWWW...

...HERE IT IS.
hmm...
RIDERS LIFE
6
KEIICHI'S SHOP


flip
flip
FWAPFWAP
I'LL BRING THIS TO KEIICHI RIGHT AWAY.
SO EASY!
EASY!
FWAPFWAPFWAPFWAP!!


--NO FIGHT-ING!
REMEM-BER--
...AND CLEAN IT UP.
IF YOU MAKE A MESS, BE SURE...
THUNK
...O-KAAAAY.
SHRIEK !!!

whaa...
WHAA
...?
SHHWARP!
YOU KNOW.. THERE WAS NOTHING I WANTED TO SEE ON TV TODAY-- SO I WOULD HAVE BEEN *PERFECTLY* HAPPY TO LEAVE THE FIGHT TO YOU...


...YOU INSIST ON MY PARTICIPATION, NO?
...BUT IT SEEMS...
PLEASE! ENJOY YOUR TAI-YAKI!!
NOT AT ALL! NOT AT ALL!
SQUASHED... ITS GUTS STREWN ACROSS THE MAT...
OHHHHH... IF ONLY YOU COULD SEE MY POOR PITIABLE TAI-YAKI.
...THROUGH MY BANDE RUBBER GRANDE!
MY FISH-SHAPED CAKE SHALL BE AVENGED...

AND THAT'S DEFINITELY NOT A RUBBER BAND!!
IT'S MORE LIKE A GIANT FAN BELT OF DOOM!!
THOSE WEREN'T GUTS!
IT'S COMMONLY FILLED WITH RED BEAN PASTE!!
NO, PEORTH !!
FIRE.
zhh
FWA

OH MY GODDESS!

S K U L D

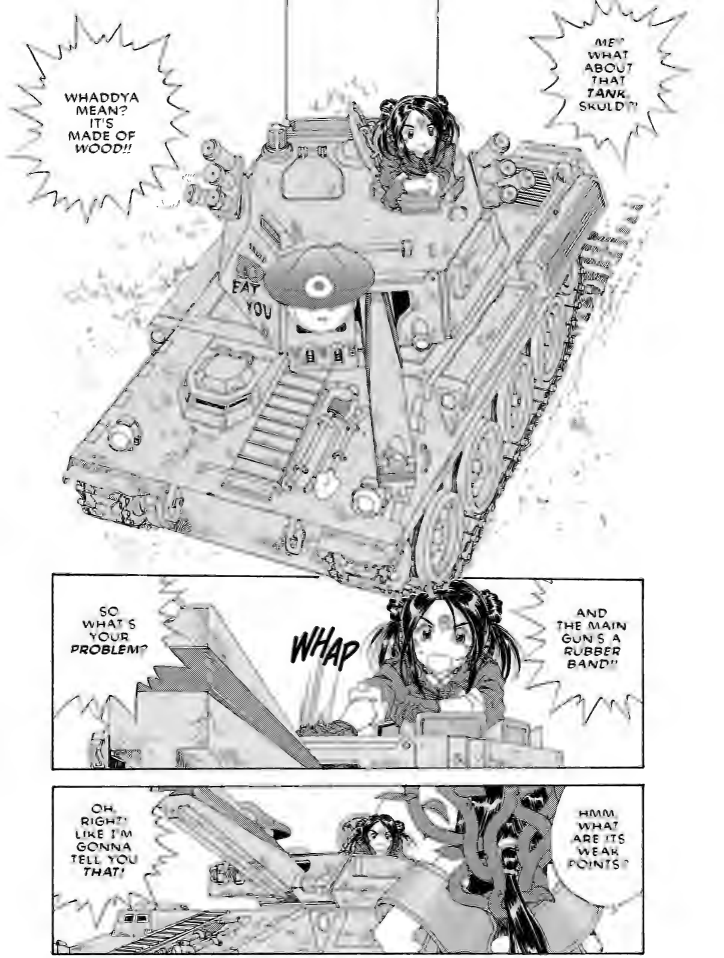
CHAPTER 173

Horseshoes and Handgrenades

YES, IT WAS QUITE A SCENE.
A RUBBER BAND WAR?
HUH?
HUH? WHAT WHAT?! RUBBER BAND GUNS?
I'M GOOD AT THOSE.
WATCH. I CAN MAKE ONE OUT OF CHOP-STICKS.
twwwiich
fwip
fwip

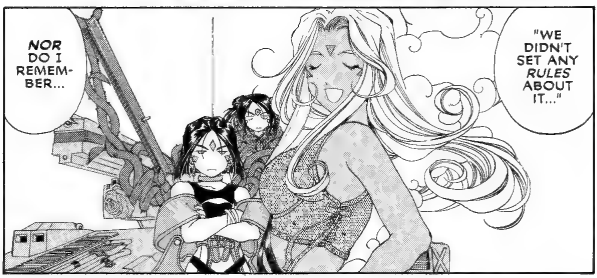
THAT'S A GOOD SKILL TO HAVE.
fwap
fwap
EXAMPLE
I JUST HOPE IT DOESN'T BECOME TOO SERIOUS.
SERI-OUS?
KRAKKL KRAKKL
HM?
...IF IT'S JUST RUBBER BANDS...
WELL, BUT...

YOU'RE ALL A BUNCH OF CHEAT-ERS!!

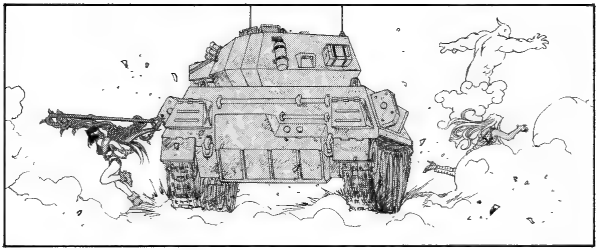

WHADDYA MEAN? IT'S MADE OF WOOD!!
ME! WHAT ABOUT THAT TANK, SKULD?!
EAT YOU
SO WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
WHAP
AND THE MAIN GUN'S A RUBBER BAND!!
OH, RIGHT! LIKE I'M GONNA TELL YOU THAT!
HMM. WHAT ARE ITS WEAK POINTS?

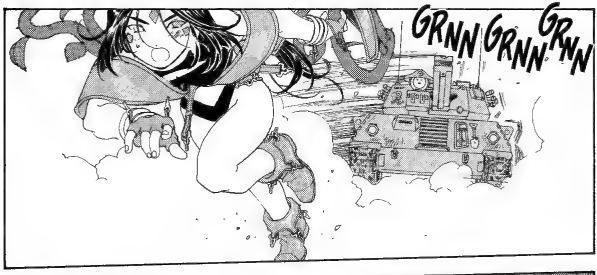
I SAY YOU'RE THE CHEATER, PEORTH!
LOOK AT YOU... WITH YOUR DOUBLE-BARRELED GUNCANNON!
YEAH! THAT'S A CHEAP TRICK!
HO HO HO...
WE DIDN'T SET ANY RULES ABOUT IT...
AND BESIDES, URD...

I tense to RELEASE this band upon my MISTRESS' ENEMIES!
byooong
byooong
...THAT MACHO SPIRIT YOU CONJURED SEEMS TO STRETCH THE RULES!


NOR DO I REMEMBER...
"WE DIDN'T SET ANY RULES ABOUT IT..."

...A CEASE-FIRE!!
FFWEEEEE
...ANY-THING ABOUT...
SKULD
I ♥ You
THWAP!
RMMBBR MMBR
NEITHER DID I!




GRNN GRNN GRNN

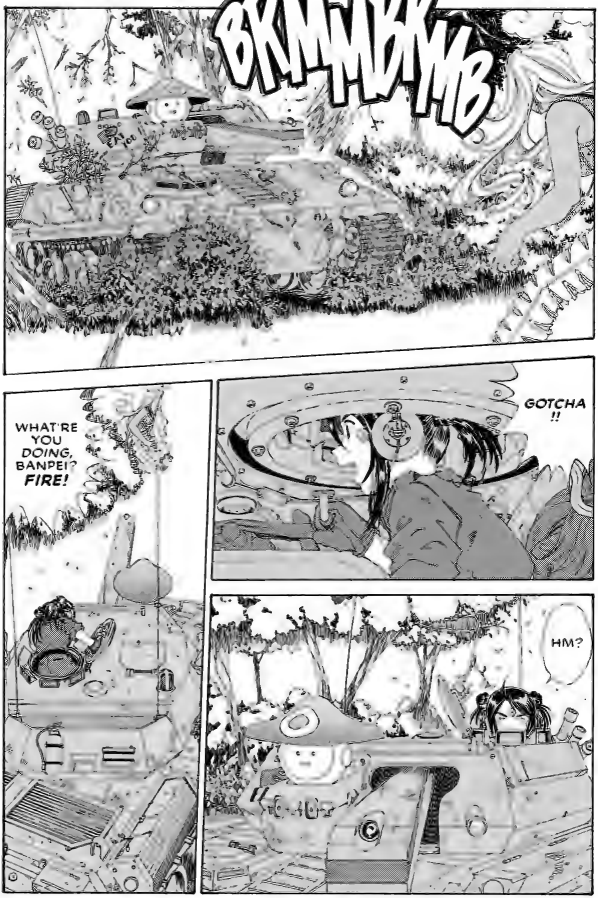
GOT IT!
SIGE! URD AT 6 O'CLOCK !!

TWAK
WHY DID SHE TURN?
?
RRRR

OKAY! GOT HER PINNED DOWN AT 6 O'CLOCK!
NOW! BANPEI! TARGET LOCK! AUTO SHOT!
ROGER! EXECUTING EVASIVE MANEUVER!
SIGEL! KEEP US COVERED ON THREE, SIX, AND NINE!
FWAP

ENOUGH!
WHICH CAN ONLY *MEAN*...!
THERE... *AGAIN!* SHE'S FIRING ON THE *DIAGONAL!*
SLT
SNAP

FWAP
FWAP
tch!
FAILED.
MMM-HMM...
ONE MORE !!
YEP!


BRMMBRMB
WHAT'RE YOU *DOING*, BANPEI? ***FIRE!***
GOTCHA !!
HM?

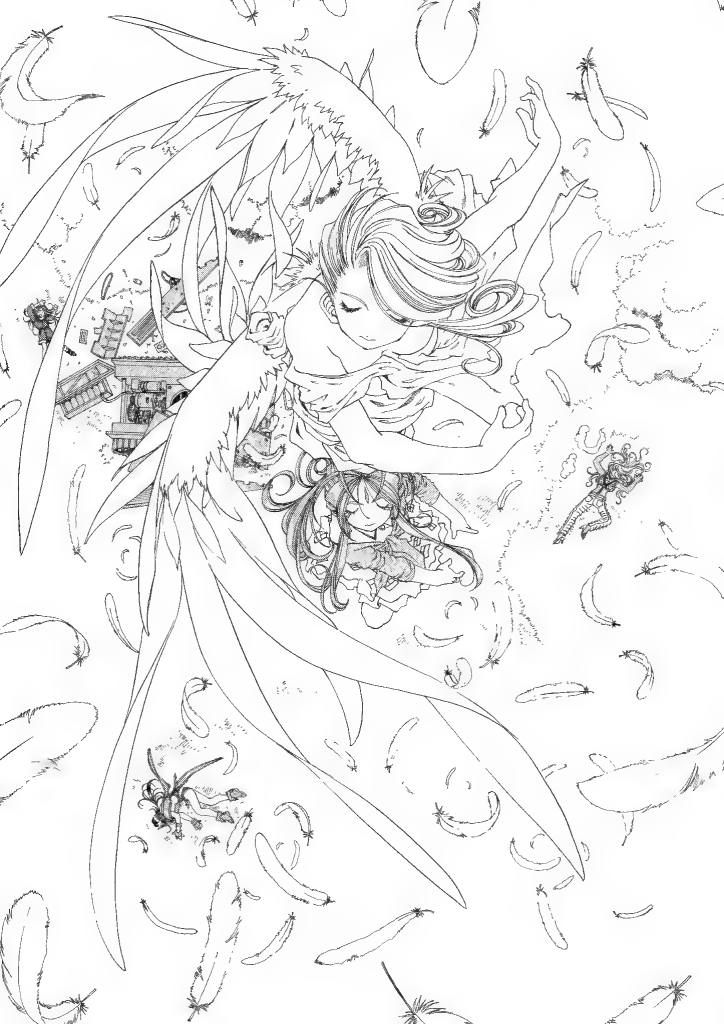
krrkk...
urk
huh?
MIS-
TRESS
SKULD...
...3
O'
CLOCK.

SHE'S GOT A 90 DEGREE SHOT AT US!!
AW, GEE WHIZ!
...SHE GAINS ARMOR THICKNESS AND ENCOURAGES RICOCHETS.
JUST AS I THOUGHT... BY CHOOSING TO TAKE FIRE ON THE DIAGONAL...
THE FIRST TO SHOOT... WILL BE THE FIRST TO DIE!!
...WILL THEN GET DEFEATED BY THE OTHER.
IT'S A STAND-OFF... WHOEVER MOVES TO DEFEAT ONE...
THOUGH I CAN HARDLY BOAST, CAN I?

CAN I JOIN IN--
I HEARD YOU'RE HAVING A RUBBER-BAND WAR!
HEY!

LOOK
OUT
!!

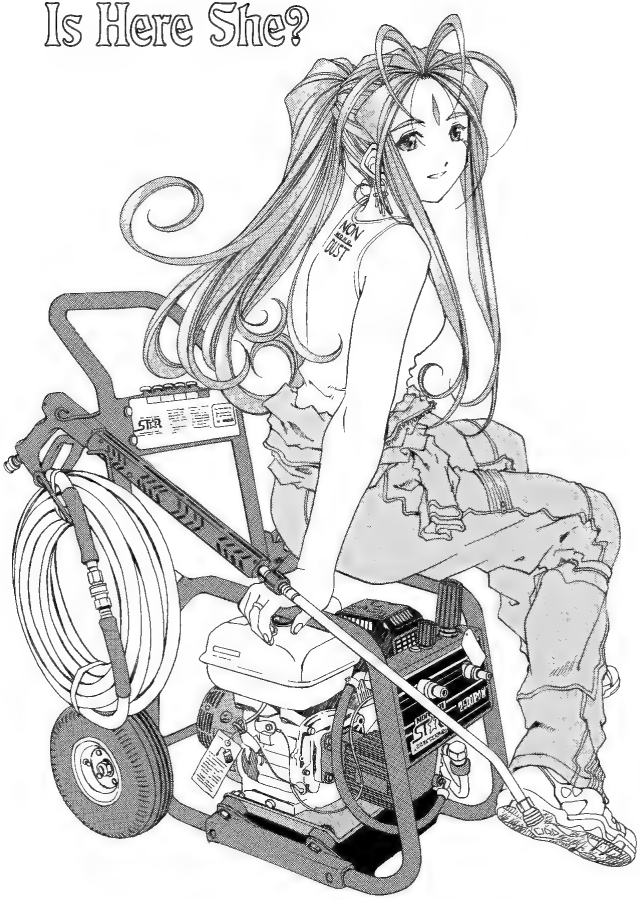
FWAP!
FWAP!
FWAP!



WELL...
...I DID TELL YOU TO CLEAN UP THE MESS.
SO LET'S CLEAN IT UP RIGHT NOW.
IS THAT *REALLY* THE ISSUE HERE...?
OKAAAAY.

CHAPTER 174

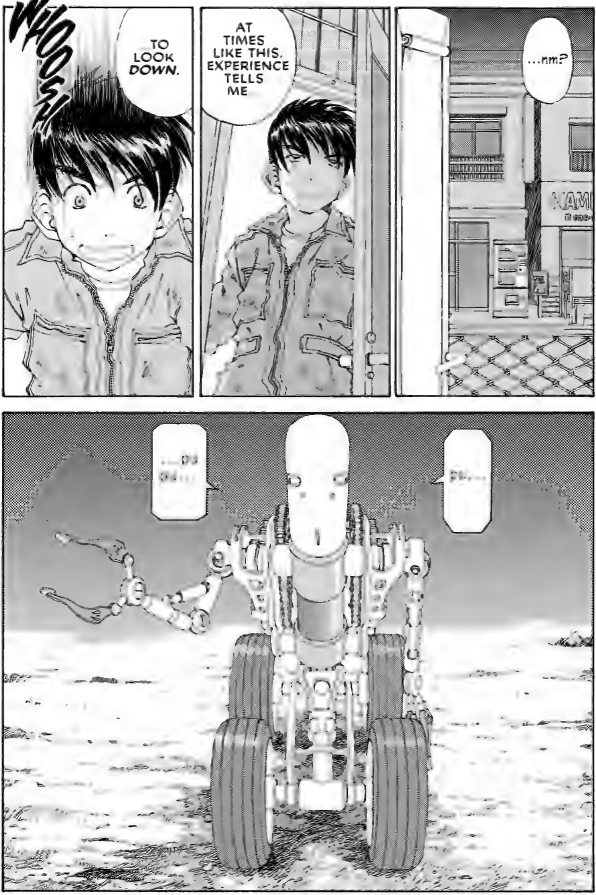
Is Here She?



AHHHH
!!
CLOSED

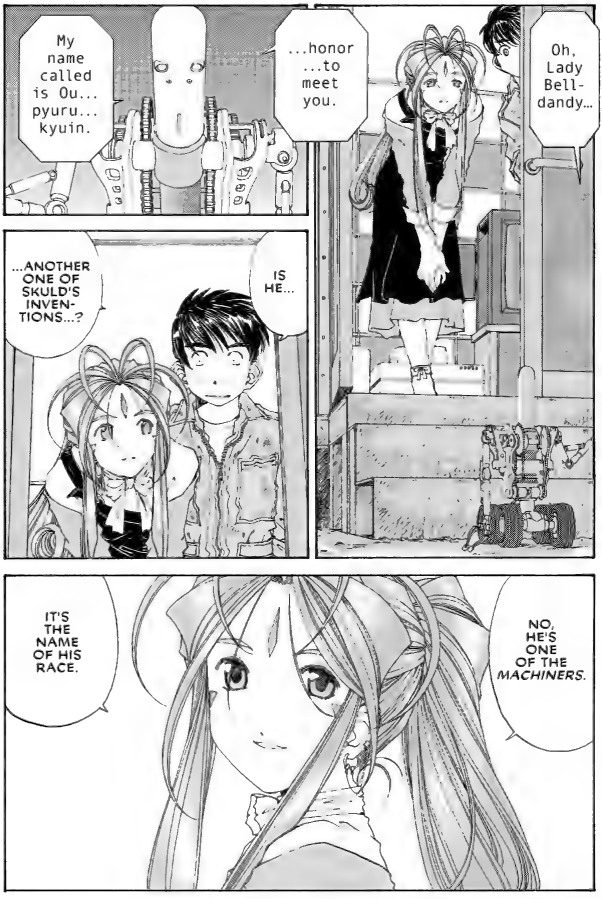
OH, NO...
THUNDER-BIRD !!
SURE...
CLOSE UP FOR ME, OKAY?
SORRY! I GOTTA GO!
AS IN "INTER-NATIONAL RESCUE"?
THUNDER-BIRDS?

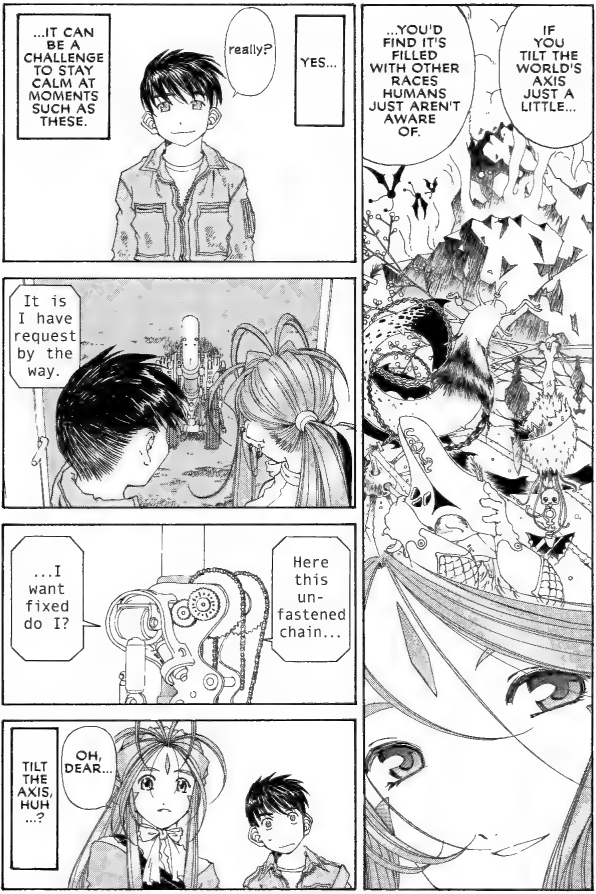
BRRMMMMMBRAAA
DID SHE FORGET TO SET HER VCR...?
RRRMMMMM
CLOSED
I SHOULD ASK TO BORROW HER TAPE AFTER-WARDS.
THNK
tok tok
CLOSED
...WE'RE CLOSED FOR THE DAY...
SORRY...
CLOSE

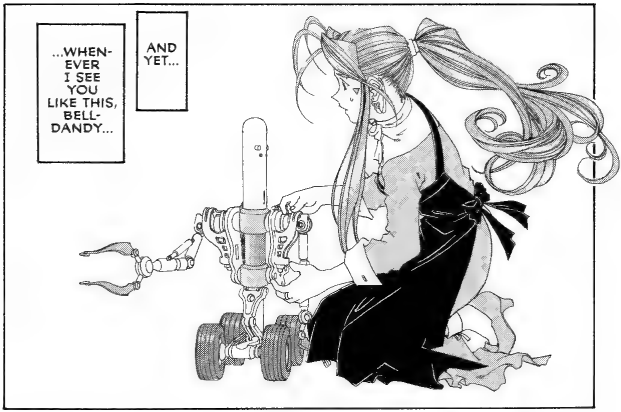

WHOOSH
TO LOOK DOWN.
AT TIMES LIKE THIS, EXPERIENCE TELLS ME
...hm?

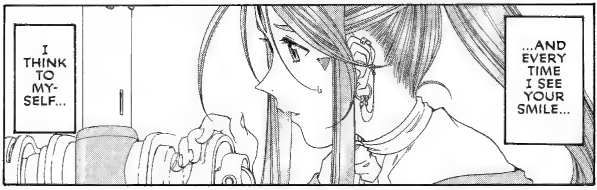
AT TIMES LIKE THIS...
EXPE-RIENCE TELLS ME...
コンコン
TO JUST PRE-TEND...
I NEVER SAW ANY-THING.
THNK
mm...
bell ...bell ...

VVVRRR
IS HERE LADY BELL-DANDY IS HERE SHE?!
OH, DID YOU HEAR THAT?
I THINK WE'VE GOT A CUSTOMER.
OH...
...GOOD EVENING, SIR MACHINERS.


My name called is Ou... pyuru... kyuin.
...honor ...to meet you.
Oh, Lady Bell-dandy...
...ANOTHER ONE OF SKULD'S INVEN-TIONS...?
IS HE...
IT'S THE NAME OF HIS RACE.
NO, HE'S ONE OF THE MACHINERS.


...IT CAN BE A CHALLENGE TO STAY CALM AT MOMENTS SUCH AS THESE.
really?
YES...
It is I have request by the way.
...I want fixed do I?
Here this un-fastened chain...
TILT THE AXIS, HUH ...?
OH, DEAR...
...YOU'D FIND IT'S FILLED WITH OTHER RACES HUMANS JUST AREN'T AWARE OF.
IF YOU TILT THE WORLD'S AXIS JUST A LITTLE...

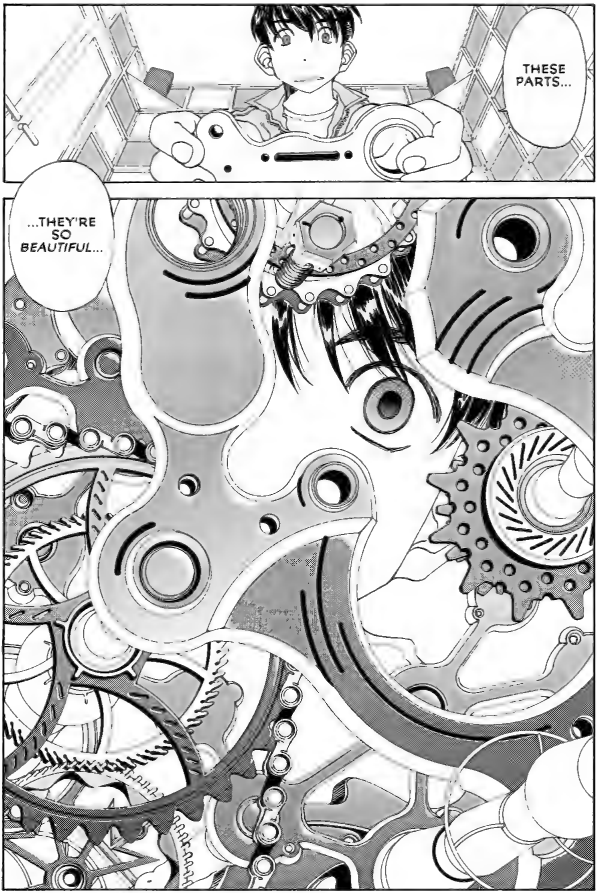

...WHEN-EVER I SEE YOU LIKE THIS, BELL-DANDY...
AND YET...

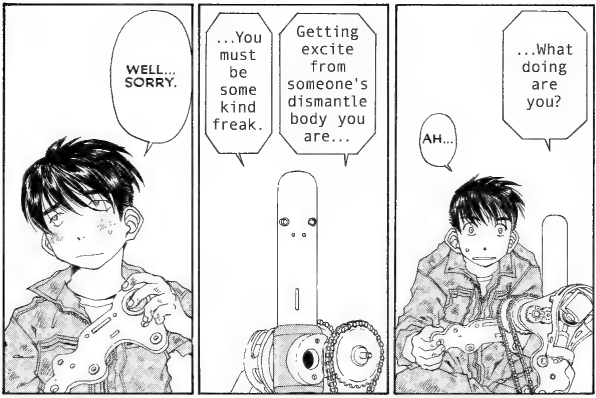

I THINK TO MY-SELF...
...AND EVERY TIME I SEE YOUR SMILE...

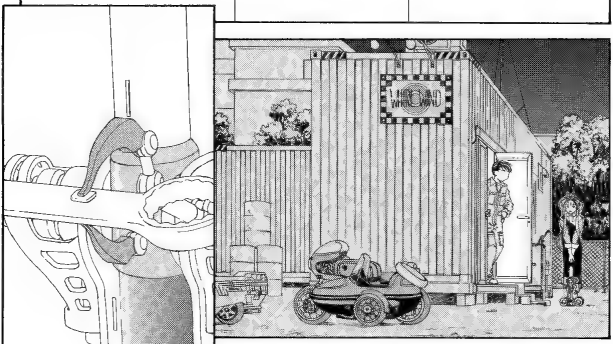
...THAT STRANGE THINGS WILL BE OKAY.

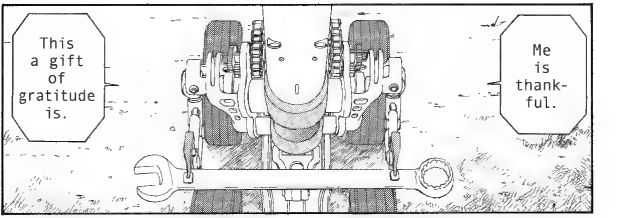
LEAVE IT TO ME.
YEAH.
REALLY?
I CAN FIX THIS IN NO TIME.
SEE?
THANK GOOD-NESS.

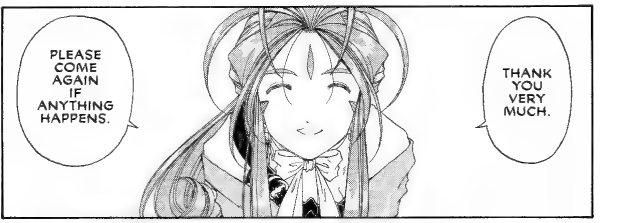
...ON THEIR PEOPLE.
I'M SO GLAD... YOU SEE, FOR SOME REASON, OUR SPELLS DON'T WORK VERY WELL...
Krkkrkk
...NOW, WE JUST HAVE TO PUT THE PARTS BACK ON.
OKAY...
...KEIICHI ISN'T A SERVANT, HE'S...
BUT...
Lady Belldandy owns a very good servant does she.

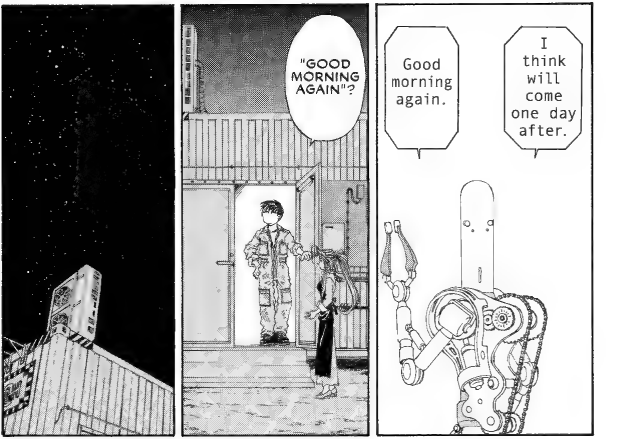

THESE PARTS...
...THEY'RE SO *BEAUTIFUL*...


WELL... SORRY.
...You must be some kind freak.
Getting excite from someone's dismantle body you are...
AH...
...What doing are you?



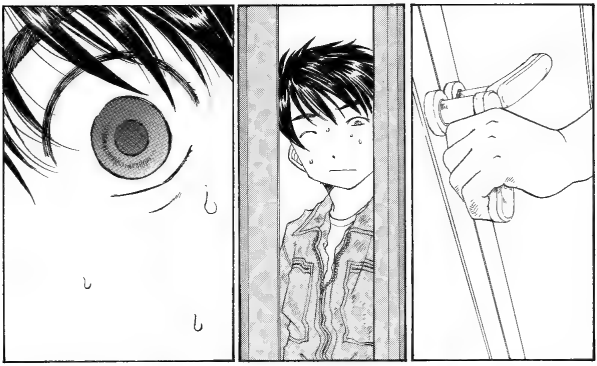

This a gift of gratitude is.
Me is thank-ful.

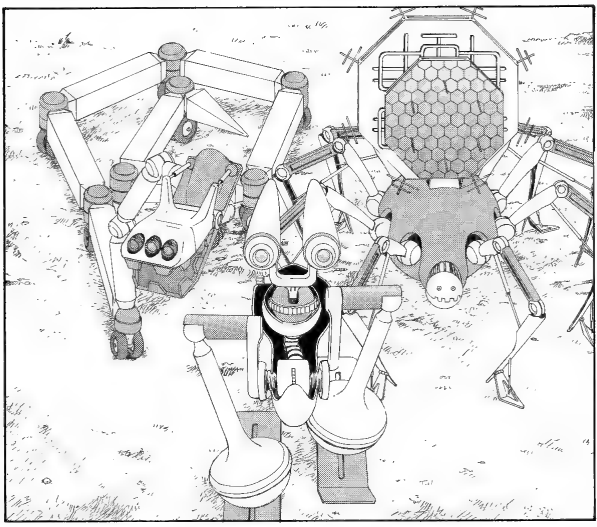

PLEASE COME AGIN IF ANYTHING HAPPENS.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

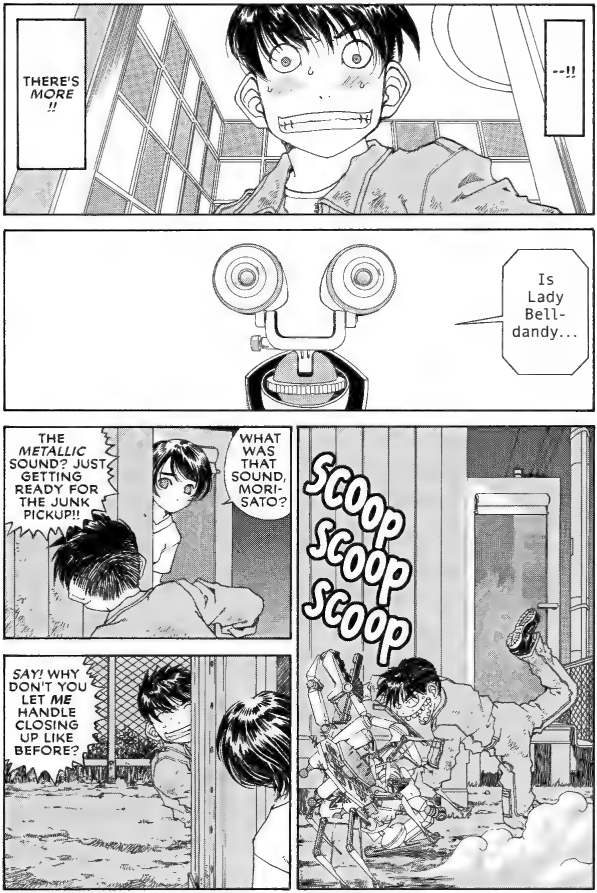

"GOOD MORNING AGAIN"?
Good morning again.
I think will come one day after.

...WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT "THUNDER-BIRDS"?
OH, YEAH...
THE NEXT DAY
HUH?
SOMEONE HAD A TRIUMPH THUNDERBIRD FOR SALE.
THEY TOLD ME TO COME BY AT SEVEN TO SEE IT.
I THOUGHT, "YEAH! I'M GONNA GET A GT!" BUT...
...TURNS OUT IT'S A WORN-OUT '97 MODEL 900.

OH, SO IT WASN'T ABOUT THE PUPPET SHOW...
I HATE THUNDER-BIRDS !!
PLUS, I GOT A FLAT ON THE WAY HOME...
SURE...
MMMM--
--LET'S CALL IT A DAY.
tok tok
Good morning again.

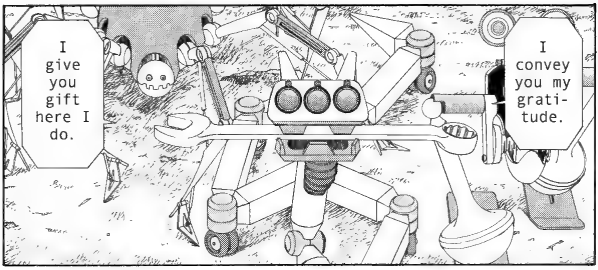


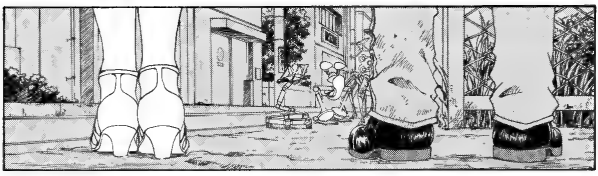


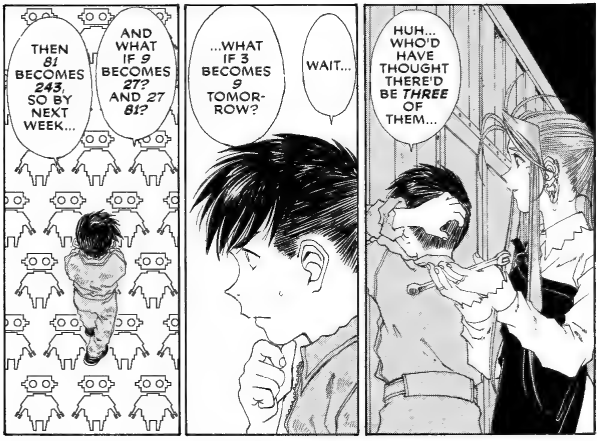

THERE'S MORE !!
--!!
Is Lady Bell-dandy...
WHAT WAS THAT SOUND, MORI-SATO?
THE METALLIC SOUND? JUST GETTING READY FOR THE JUNK PICKUP!!
SCOOP SCOOP SCOOP
SAY! WHY DON'T YOU LET ME HANDLE CLOSING UP LIKE BEFORE?

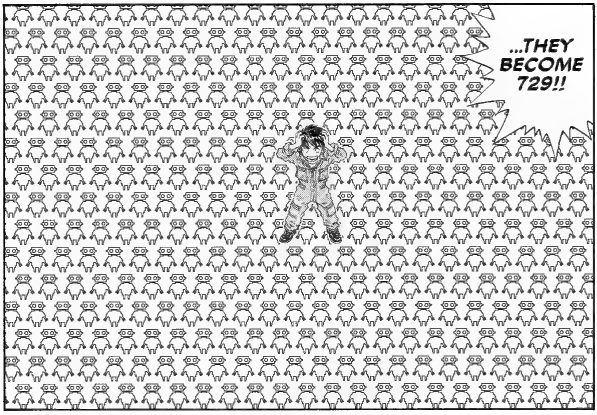
What do you meaning JUNK?!
NO-THIIING !!
WHAT WAS THAT, MORI-SATO?
Whew
WOW! CAN'T PASS THAT OFFER UP!
YOU'RE SURE?
AHH... OKAY OKAY...
Bell--
WELL... PLEASE LEAVE IT TO ME.
...REPAIRS, RIGHT? DEAR CUSTOM-ERS?

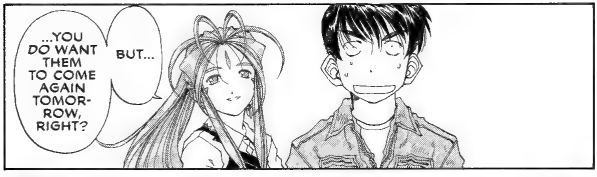
Ohh... Pup-yui...
JUST CALL ME ANYTHING YOU LIKE..
Indeed wonderful servant as rumored is.
ALL COM-PLETE.
--PEELING SOLDER-ING.
A BROKEN BALL BEARING--
A SNAPPED SPRING--

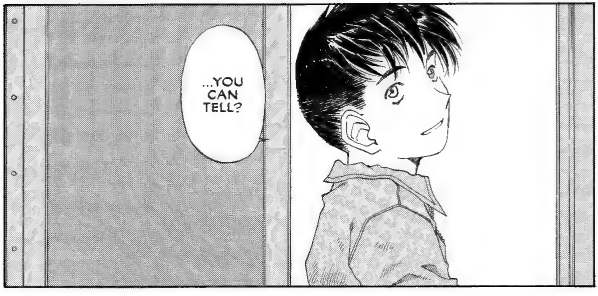

I give you gift here I do.
I convey you my grati-tude.

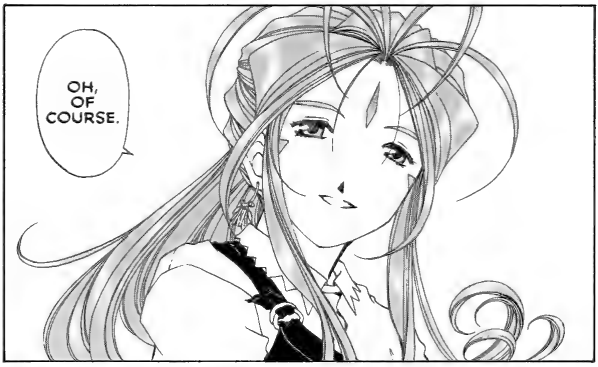


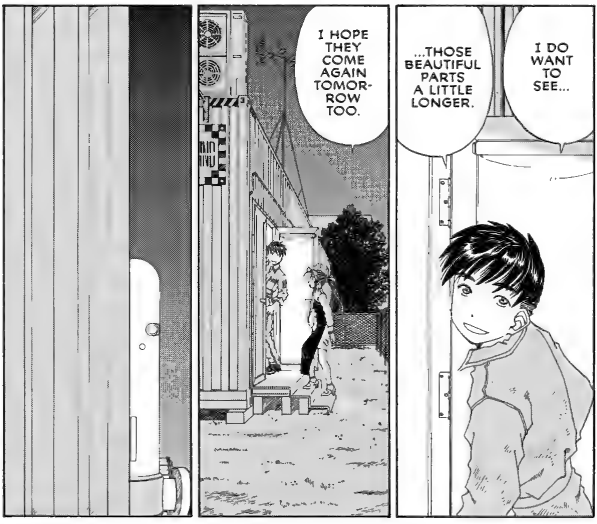

THEN 81 BECOMES 243, SO BY NEXT WEEK...
AND WHAT IF 9 BECOMES 27? AND 27 81?
...WHAT IF 3 BECOMES 9 TOMOR-ROW?
WAIT...
HUH... WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THERE'D BE THREE OF THEM...


...THEY BECOME 729!!


...YOU DO WANT THEM TO COME AGAIN TOMOR-ROW, RIGHT?
BUT...


...YOU CAN TELL?


OH, OF COURSE.


I DO WANT TO SEE...
...THOSE BEAUTIFUL PARTS A LITTLE LONGER.
I HOPE THEY COME AGAIN TOMOR-ROW TOO.

CHAPTER 175

That Flying Entity

VRRVRRVRRVRRVRRVRR
WHAT..
WHAT
?!
?

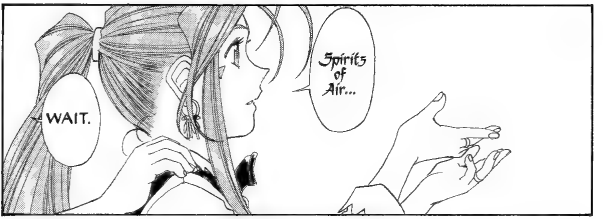
...pibu...
mip...
A baby?
YOOOOH

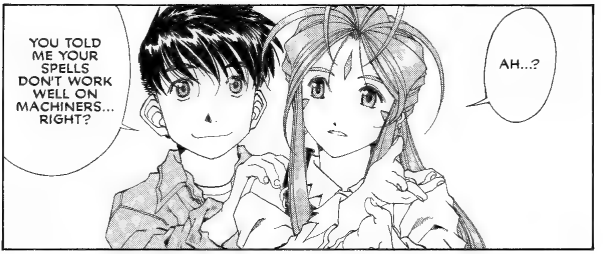
MISSED YOUR FLIGHT?
THEN THOSE TIRES...
...MISSED MY FLIGHT I DID SO.

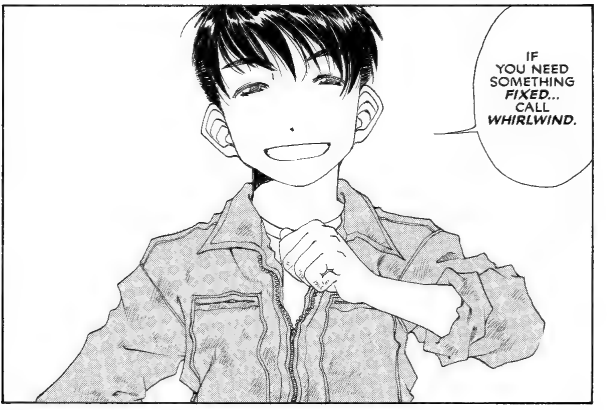
PI PU PII GAA CAME FOR YOU, THEN?
Its nose gear I am.
Yes. That flying entity Pi Pu Pii Gaa.
You pronun-ciation bad. Pi Pu PII Gaa.
ITS NAME IS... PI PU PI GAA?
...THEN HOW'D IT TAKE OFF?!
VVVMMM
...IF YOU'RE ITS NOSE GEAR...
WAIT...
Ah, Lady Belldandy says it perfect does she.

AH-HA... VERTICAL TAKEOFF AND LANDING ...?
Pi Pu Pii Gaa can fly straight up.
HM. MAYBE...
...IT CAN'T COME DOWN ...?

OKAY. OKAY. NOW YOU'RE PANICKING.
Not problem. Both calm and normal.
Ying! Ying!
BUT... ARE YOU OKAY? I MEAN YOU SEEM PRETTY CALM ABOUT IT...
100% probable unable to land verti-cally.
Mechani-cal trouble report-ing.
I SHALL LAND IT.
I UNDER-STAND.

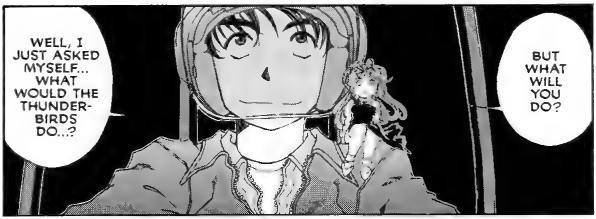

WAIT.
Spirits of Air...


YOU TOLD ME YOUR SPELLS DON'T WORK WELL ON MACHINERS... RIGHT?
AH...?

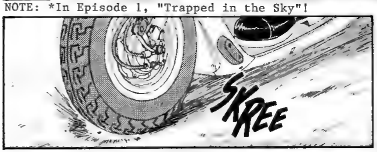

IF YOU NEED SOMETHING *FIXED*... CALL *WHIRLWIND*.

...THUNDER-BIRDS ARE GO.
YES... AT TIMES LIKE THIS...
I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU.
POP POP POPP
Reliable perfect-ly.
THINK YOU CAN GUIDE IT IN?

THEN LET'S GO!!
OKAY SO FAR

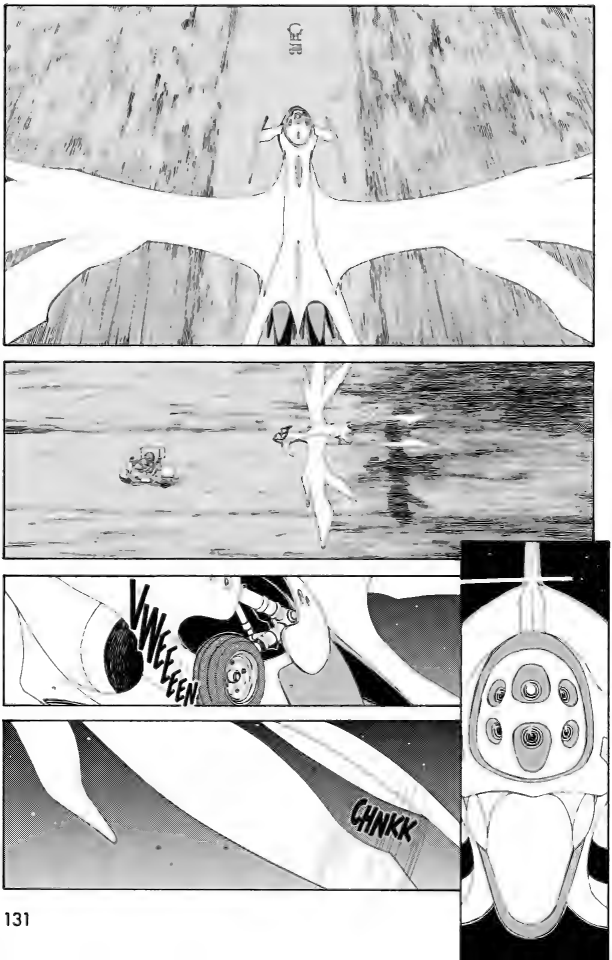


NOTE: *In Episode 1, "Trapped in the Sky"!



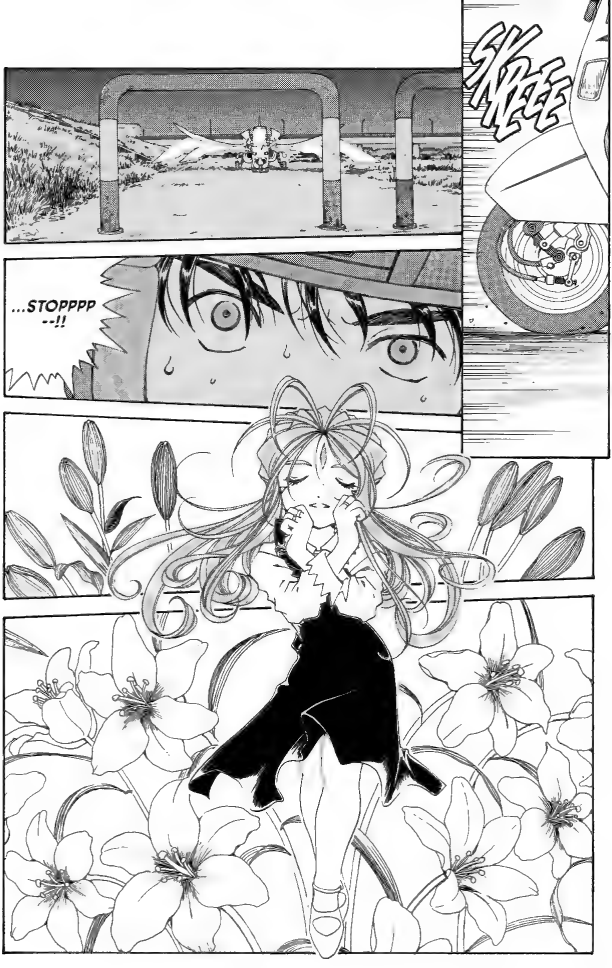
SO, THEN... JUST AS WE PLANNED.
OKAY. THE WIND'S GOOD.
Roger. Leave guidance me.
GOTCHA !!

VVVMMMM
OKAY.. STEADY...
HERE IT COMES !!
...plu... plu...
...plu... plu...


VWEEEEEN
CHNKK

WHOOMF
SKREEE
CHAK
OKAY! IT'S DOWN!

SKREEEECH
HUH ?!
KEIICHI! UP AHEAD!
UH-OH!


SKREE
...STOPPPP --!!

CHAPTER 176

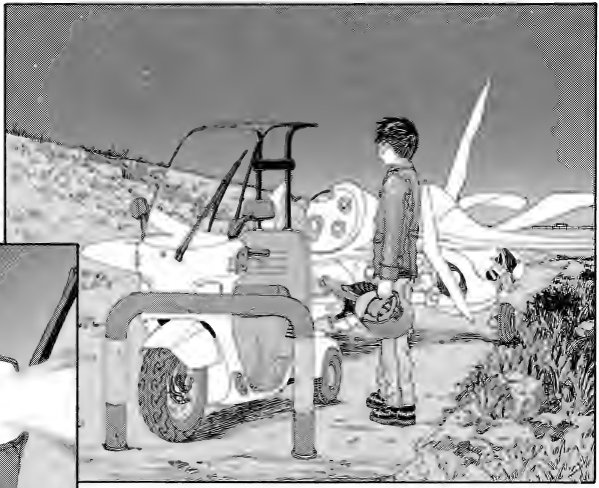
Sign of Gratitude

STOP, OKAY ?!
UM, YEAH.
IT MAY NOT WORK ON MACHINERS...

...BUT IT WILL WORK HERE !!!
BLOOME

WHOOOMF
AIR-BRAKES
WOW...
KKOOOOMMFF

...
WHEW
that was close



UM... THANKS TO YOU...
IT WENT VERY WELL, DIDN'T IT?

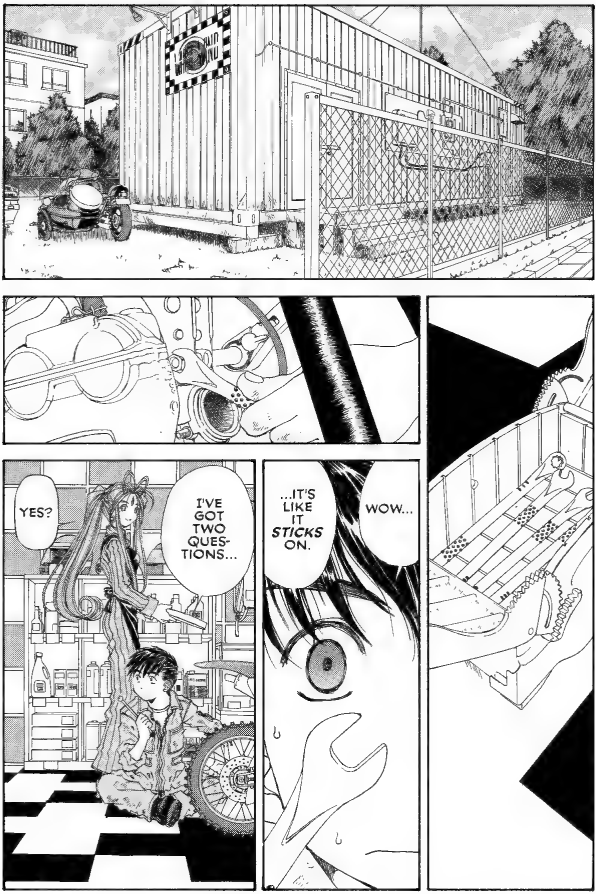
This sign of gratitude is.
Take back my call you mere "servant."
You HIGH GRADE of servant are.
OH... THAT'S ALL...
WHRRR

VEEEEEEEEN
I like you yes...
EEEEEEEEN
...because you are one of the few humans...
DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?!
HUH ?!

FLOAT
...who understands a machine's heart.
KEIICHI...
?

ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL ...?

YEAH!! SURE IS!! HA HA HA HA HA!!


YES?
I'VE GOT TWO QUES-TIONS...
...IT'S LIKE IT *STICKS* ON.
WOW...

DO MACHINERS USE THE METRIC SYSTEM ...?
...WHY IS THIS TOOL *METRIC?*
AND... WHY'D THEY COME HERE, ANYWAY...?
...AND THEY *HAD* THE TOOLS, BUT DIDN'T *USE* THEM.
THEY DON'T USE THE METRIC SYSTEM...
ONE ANSWER WILL DO FOR BOTH.

BECAUSE THEY NEEDED TO BE FIXED BY *YOU*, KEIICHI.
WHY?
SO THEY ***DELIBERATELY*** CAME TO BE FIXED?

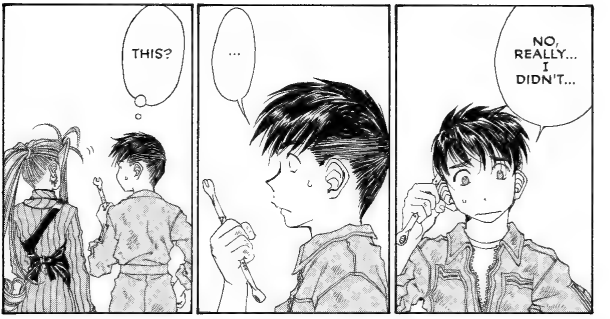
MORISATOOO...
THEY...
WHY *ME*? WHERE'S THE NECESSITY IN THAT?
?
?

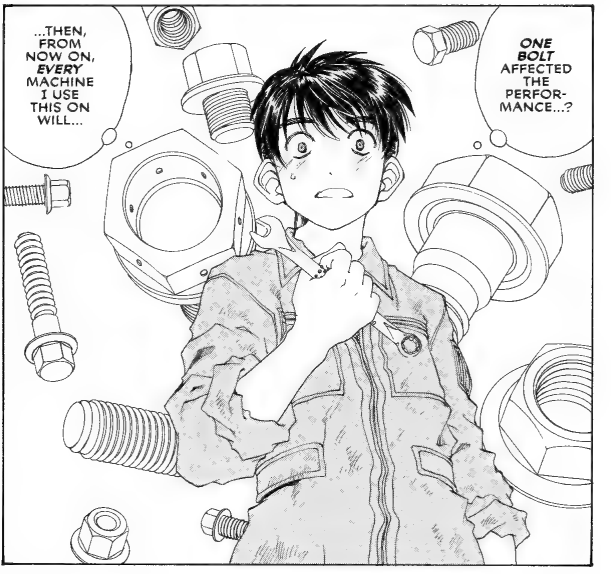
...TO MY DOMANI?
WHAT... DID YOU DO...

IS SOME-THING WRONG?
JUST CHANGED THE OIL, LIKE YOU SAID.
?

RRRMMM
COME OVER HERE!!
WRONG?
HARDLY.

RRRMMM
RRRMMM
YOU USED SOME KIND OF *ADDITIVE*, I'LL BET...?
IDLE AND PEDAL RESPONSE HAS IMPROVED *DRASTICALLY*.


THIS?
...
NO, REALLY... I DIDN'T...

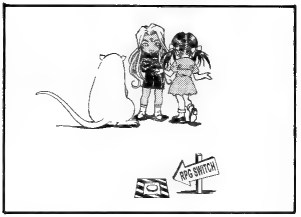

...THEN, FROM NOW ON, *EVERY* MACHINE I USE THIS ON WILL...
ONE BOLT AFFECTED THE PERFOR-MANCE...?

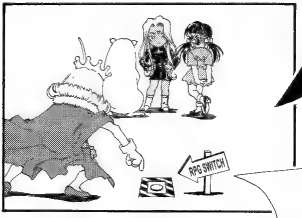
...AND THE MACHINERS I TOUCHED, TOO...
NOW I GET IT...
...YOU WERE CHOSEN, KEIICHI...
YES...
NOTH-ING!
WELL? WHAT'D YOU ADD?!
WHAT ARE YOU GRINNING ABOUT?

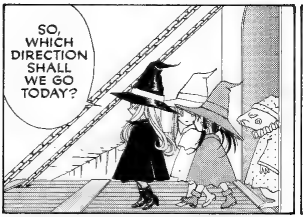
...BECAUSE YOUR HANDS ARE LOVED BY MACHINES AS WELL.

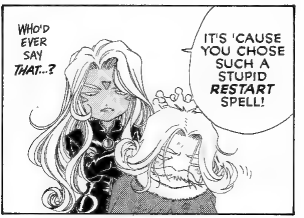
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
BUT, MR. CUSTOM-ER...
...WE'RE NOT A VOLUNTEER OUTFIT.
Full guided tour of shop. Group holiday we are on.
sigh SO WHAT DO YOU WANT?
Sights of human world!
Memo-rized.
You said quote please leave it to me end quote.

ADVENTURES OF THE MINI-GODDESSES SPECIAL: MAGICAL DO-MI-SO KABOOM!

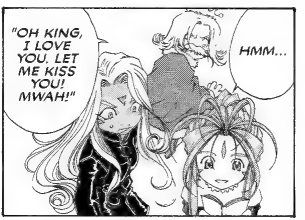


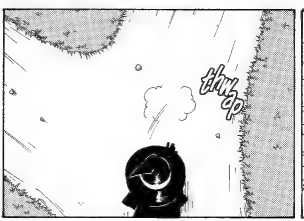


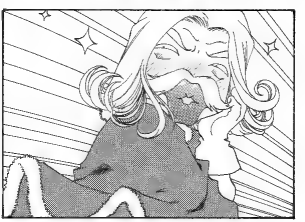

SO, WHICH DIRECTION SHALL WE GO TODAY?


WHO'D EVER SAY THAT...?
IT'S 'CAUSE YOU CHOSE SUCH A STUPID RESTART SPELL!

"MAGIC STICK" ...?
I SHALL CAST A MAGIC STICK TO CHOOSE!


"OH KING, I LOVE YOU. LET ME KISS YOU! MWAH!"
HMM...


think up



LET ME GUESS. YOU'VE SET TRAPS THAT WAY.
NO, YOU WANT LEFT, HUH?

PER-VERT KING !!
THAT'S NOT THE RESTART SPELL...

I THINK YOU'RE BEING TOO HARSH.
LAND SOFT-SHELL LEVEL 5
A LAND SOFT-SHELL APPEARS
SURELY GAN KNOWS BETTER THAN THAT.
HM. IF IT HEARS YOUR NAME FIVE TIMES, IT WON'T LET GO.
FAMOUS MONSTERS
IT'S GAN THIS, AND GAN THAT--
ARRGH! STOP!
...GAN!
BE CARE-FUL...
AND HE HAD TWO TIMES LEFT, TOO.
YEAH, GAN! YOU'RE SO CARE-LESS!

CYCLOTETRAMETHYLENE-TETRANITRAMINE!
I CAN SEE!
WHAT'S MINE ...?
WAIT!
SKILL: BOMB FACTORY
I CAN SEE IT SOMEHOW-- I MUST HAVE A SPECIAL SKILL!
WELL, YOU SEE, YOU PERFORM A NITRATION OF HEXAMINE IN THE PRESENCE OF ACETIC ANHY-DRIDE...
HOW DOES THAT WORK?
WHAT DOES YOURS SAY?
OH, YEAH. CHECK YOUR HAND-BOOK.
...hello?
...THE FINAL RESULT YIELDS AN EXPLOSIVE VELOCITY OF...
SKILL: PROPHECY

AND I?
...WHAT ABOUT ME ...?
AND SO...
SKILL: LUNACY
tick
SKILL: ELECTRICITY
tick
tick
HEY!
HEY... WHERE ARE YOU ALL GOING ...?
tick
DON'T... DON'T MAKE ME GET MAD!
tick
tick
COME BACK! WHAT'S WRONG ?!
tick
whoosh
whoosh

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Special Preview of the Upcoming Novel:

OH MY GODDESS!

— FIRST END —

by Yumi Tohma

We interrupt our regular Letters to the Enchantress—but only for a good reason, to bring you this exclusive preview of the forthcoming novel *Oh My Goddess!—First End*, out in November from Dark Horse! *OMG!—First End* is an officially authorized story from Kodansha's Afternoon Novels line, which, as you might expect, is fiction based on manga associated with *Afternoon* magazine . . . the Japanese home of *Oh My Goddess!*, natch.

Translated by the very talented Camellia Nieh (of DH's *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* novels), *First End* is written by none other than Yumi Tohma, who has played the Japanese voice of Urd in every version of the *Oh My Goddess!* anime since 1993. Another *OMG!* veteran artist contributing to the *First End* novel is its illustrator, Hidenori Matsubara, the longtime character designer of the anime.

What will Ms. Tohma's unique perspective reval about the characters we know so well? Why is the story called *First End*? Well, we hope you'll look forward to reading the entire *Oh My Goddess!—First End* novel when it hits your store in November, and don't forget to keep sending your letters and fan art to Letters to the Enchantress, by post to 10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222, or via e-mail: omg@darkhorse.com!

Illustration by Hidenori Matsubara *Oh My Goddess!—First End* ©2007 Yumi Tohma/Kosuke Fujishima. All rights reserved. First published in Japan in 2006 by Kodansha, Ltd., Tokyo. Publication rights for this English edition arranged through Kodansha Ltd. This English-language edition ©2007 by Dark Horse Comics, Inc.

"Uh-oh . . ."

Keiichi let out a soft exclamation and stopped what he was doing.

In a corner of the temple grounds, he'd been running the cell motor of his sidecar-equipped BMW for more than three hours. Louder and softer, louder and softer . . . its rumble had been irregular but continuous. Now, the motor stopped, gave off a few muffled pops, and was quiet.

Keiichi straightened up slightly—he'd been crouching for hours, completely absorbed in his work.

"Oops."

He let out a long sigh.

The sun shone brightly in the big blue sky, interrupted now and again by cool breezes from the east. The fan-shaped golden leaves of the ginkgo trees danced in the wind.

"I shouldn't have pushed it . . ."

He stood up slowly and began to walk with a heavy stride. The dried leaves scattered on the ground crunched underfoot.

It was a mild, sunny afternoon at Tarikihongan Temple. After glancing around the grounds, Keiichi gave the sliding door to the main building a strong shove, sending it rattling open.

Sunlight streamed into the dark interior.

Once inside the front entryway, Keiichi sighed deeply, as if to belie the vigor with which he had pushed open the door.

"Now I've done it," he lamented aloud.

Reaching back, Keiichi quietly pulled the door shut and sank listlessly onto the stoop that led up into the building. Carelessly, he wiped the sweat from his brow with his sleeve, which was rolled up to the elbow, and gazed down at his still-clenched right fist.

"Out of the way, Keiichi!"

Startled, Keiichi jumped to his feet and did an about-face.

"O-Oh! Skuld!"

Where had she come from? Skuld stood with a shopping basket in hand and a sunny expression that contrasted with Keiichi's flustered one.

"Don't just sit there in the middle of the front entryway. If you're taking a break, at least come inside."

He certainly couldn't argue with that.

"Oh, uh, sorry . . . Are you going shopping?"

"Yep! The new issue of *Dobon* comes out today!"

Dobon was the manga magazine that Skuld read faithfully every month. She could always be counted on to be in a good mood the day it hit the shelves.

"Th-that's great!" That accounted for her cheeriness. As discreetly as possible, Keiichi used his left hand to cover the object he was gripping, hiding it behind his back.

"Well," he offered pleasantly, trying to match Skuld's bright smile, "take care, then!" He began to beat a swift retreat, but unfortunately, human beings are cursed with the tendency to be most obvious when they're trying hardest to hide something.

Not surprisingly, Skuld noticed.

"Just a minute, Keiichi . . . You're hiding something, aren't you!"

"!!"

Bull's-eye. Keiichi froze.

"First you act all panicked and flustered, then you turn all cool and casual . . . something's going on!"

Skuld extended her hand. Unfortunately, her first *Reveal Hidden Object* spell failed. Despite his despondency, Keiichi's reflexes remained intact.

"Rats!"

She attempted the spell a second time, then a third. But each time, her hand only waved impotently in the air.

"Argh!" Skuld glowered at the floor. Her rosy mood had evaporated completely, and ominous angry clouds were beginning to gather.

". . . id, aren't you . . ."

"Huh?" Keiichi couldn't make out whatever it was Skuld was muttering. But it was plain from her trembling shoulders and clenched fists that her irritation was quickly evolving into rage.

"S-S-Skuld?" Keiichi stammered fearfully. Skuld's anger voltage continued its steady climb.

"You're treating me . . . like a kid . . . aren't you!"

"Wha. . .?"

This time, her words were clear but the message caught him off-guard.

"You're blowing me off because you think I'm just a kid, aren't you?!"

"Huh? No . . . I never . . ."

The unforeseen accusation and unprovoked surge of fury baffled Keiichi. But with the needle of her anger gauge hovering in its red zone, Skuld was in no state to listen to reason.

Slowly, she raised her head. "Fine! If that's how you're going to be . . . I'm telling!"

"What?"

"I'm telling Belldandy on you!"

"What's Belldandy got to do with this?" For some reason, the sudden mention of Skuld's big sister seemed not so much surprising to Keiichi as completely absurd.

But when Skuld was set on getting her way, reason and coherence went out the window. This time, her power play was to use Keiichi's beloved Belldandy as leverage to make Keiichi cave.

"Belldandyyyy . . . Belldandyyy . . . Keiichi's hi—" Skuld began to shout toward the back rooms, her voice triumphant. This was beginning to get out of hand.

"Okay, okay! It's really not that big a deal!"

Reluctantly, Keiichi slowly brought his right hand out from behind his back.

"That's better!" A pleased smile spread across Skuld's face, both from the satisfaction of having won and the excitement of uncovering what she was after.

"I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed," Keiichi found himself muttering when he saw the curiosity glittering in Skuld's eyes.

" . . . A screwdriver?"

Skuld frowned at the uninteresting tool in Keiichi's hand. It was clear from her reaction that this wasn't what she'd expected.

Keiichi sighed. Just as he'd thought.

"I tried to tell you . . ."

"Then why wouldn't you just show it to me? You looked so gloomy—I thought it was something important!" Her interest completely evaporated, Skuld retrieved the shopping basket she'd flung to the ground.

Keiichi's expression clouded slightly at her sudden indifference.

"It *is* important. To me, anyway . . . As it happens, this screwdriver is kind of special . . . I've always done my best to take excellent care of it. But just now, I was using it, and I twisted it just a little bit too hard . . ."

"Oh?"

Skuld took the specialty Phillips screwdriver from Keiichi and examined it closely. A tiny corner was missing from the precision-formed plus-shape at its tip.

"It looks to me like it should still work."

The flaw was so small it was hardly noticeable without careful scrutiny. But a Phillips screwdriver's torque was a function of its head fitting perfectly into the grooves of the screw. Even the tiniest chip would change the tool's feel significantly, hampering its effectiveness at performing delicate tasks.

"If it really bothers you, I'll get you a new one while I'm out. A number 3, right? Until I get back, you can borrow one of mine," Skuld offered breezily.

Keiichi snatched the screwdriver back. "No, Skuld . . ."

"Why not? It's hard to use now, right?"

"That's not the point . . ."

As Keiichi gazed lovingly at his screwdriver, Skuld registered disappointment. Here she'd gone out of her way to be nice, and Keiichi was turning her down?

"Then what *is* the point?"

"It's just that . . ." Keiichi bit his lip. "Remember when I told you that scratches are part of a person's history? That goes for everything we use, including tools. Even when they get chipped, or worse, broken . . . when you've used something for a long time, through good times and bad, that makes that something one of a kind. It makes it irreplaceable. That's how I feel, anyway. . ."

Skuld listened attentively to what Keiichi had to say, but in the end she remained unconvinced.

"Yeah, but . . . it's a tool. Usability is everything, right?" She swung her shopping basket and hopped into her shoes. "Sheesh, what a waste of time! I'm off to buy *Dobon* now!" Where was her rage now? Skuld bounded off into the afternoon sun, her good cheer restored.

"I suppose that makes sense, too . . ." Keiichi smiled wryly from inside the building as he watched Skuld disappear into the distance.

"But I still prefer this old thing," he concluded, grinning.

He squeezed the Phillips screwdriver.

CHAPTER 1
Utakata–Ephemera

Dancing gently in the breeze, the large white magnolia flowers looked almost like handkerchiefs tied to the tree's limbs. Amid the blooms, sparrows flew busily hither and thither. Twittering happily, they flitted from branch to branch as if playing hide-and-seek.

Just then, a single sparrow fluttered to the ground, abandoing its companions frolicking among the blossoms. In bouncy little hops, it advanced toward the figure that stood near the front entrance to the main building.

Vreeeeeeee.

A lens focused on the approaching sparrow, capturing the small, round black eyes peeking out from its cap of white and brown feathers.

Banpei RX smiled in spite of himself. Well—to be accurate, the "anti-demon tactical strike robot" built by Skuld to protect the goddesses and Keiichi day and night didn't have the capacity to actually smile. But if he did, Banpei would have been smiling right now.

He was capable of love, of offering aid . . . and even of making mistakes. Endowed with an abundance of both compassion and pathos, Banpei was more tenderhearted than a human being.

The sparrow drew fearlessly closer to Banpei RX, as if it could somehow read the security robot's true nature. Then it leapt into the air, coming to rest on the black conical straw hat on Banpei's head.

Immediately, the rest of the flock, having observed their companion from above, swarmed down toward Banpei. Perching on the robot's hat and arms, the sparrows amused themselves, fluttering and alighting, fluttering and alighting.

Bathed in the gentle rays of the still-dawning sun, it was a peaceful morning like any other at Tarikihongan Temple.

* * *

In a hot skillet, a pat of butter sputtered and melted, readying the pan to receive the frothy, beaten eggs. Sizzling appetizingly, the eggs cooked quickly.

Belldandy sang a lilting melody as she stirred the eggs with her cooking chopsticks, her long, chestnut-colored ponytail swaying to the tune of her song. A rosy glow flushed her pale, creamy complexion.

When they were scrambled but still moist, Belldandy transferred the fluffy eggs to a plate. Then she added the bacon she'd fried in a separate pan. There—breakfast was ready.

Belldandy smiled, satisfied with her work.

"What should I be doing?"

In the living room, an agitated Keiichi was beginning to regret having sat down at the low table so early.

"Reading the paper? No, that doesn't seem right . . . Watching TV? No, that's not right either . . ."

Belldandy's singing was faintly audible through the sliding paper doors that separated the living room from the kitchen. This was part of her normal breakfast-making routine.

On the other hand . . . the sight that had met Keiichi's eyes that morning made it clear that this was not going to be an ordinary breakfast.

The low table was adorned with a lace tablecloth. Keiichi's normal chopsticks and chopsticks-rest were absent, supplanted by a carefully placed set of sparkling silverware.

"Why am I so nervous?"

Keiichi's pulse thumped loudly in his ears. He couldn't help feeling somewhat ashamed that he was so intimidated by this situation.

"This is pretty pathetic." He gave a wry little laugh and took deep breaths, doing his best to calm down.

The goddess' gentle voice greeted him cheerfully. "Keiichi, your breakfast is ready!"

The paper door slid open, and the living room was transformed by a delicious smell and Belldandy's dazzling smile. For a moment, Keiichi found himself leaning forward in eager anticipation.

"Pardon me," Belldandy excused herself demurely as she entered the room with her well-laden tray.

"Er, of course!"

This was definitely no ordinary breakfast. Flustered, Keiichi sat up as straight as possible.

In a long beige dress and white lacy apron, Belldandy almost looked like a maid-servant. Keiichi was unable to look directly at her as she kneeled beside him and served him with deft, graceful movements.

First, a glass of fresh, antioxidant-rich tomato juice. A bowl of yogurt garnished with chopped strawberries and apples in the upper left corner, and a steaming cup of creamy corn soup in the upper right. A basket of fragrant, piping hot rolls on the left, and finally, the main dish—bacon and scrambled eggs—between the knife and fork.

"Wow!" Keiichi let out a sigh of wonder at the dazzling spread. But immediately, he realized his dilemma. "Um, I don't really know the proper etiquette for this kind of thing . . ."

From the waist up, the use of silverware suggested that Western table manners were in order. But from the waist down, sitting cross-legged at a low table added a definite Japanese element, making Keiichi wonder if perhaps such decorum was unnecessary. Despite this awkwardness, Keiichi racked his brains, trying to remember the correct rules for dining with a knife and fork.

"Keiichi, the most important thing is that you enjoy your meal. I'll be happiest if you just forget about proper etiquette and eat however you like."

Finally, Keiichi's tense expression softened. "Thanks, Belldandy—that's a big relief!"

He set his knife down and transferred the fork to his right hand.

"This looks delicious!"

With a look of pure joy, Keiichi started in on his scrambled eggs. Next, he applied a pat of margarine to a fresh-baked roll. The warm bread quickly melted the margarine, and Keiichi opened his mouth wide and sank his teeth into its softness. A delicious fragrance wafted up into his nostrils.

"I know you've said that rice fills you up better than bread . . . but the photo of a hotel-style breakfast in my magazine looked so lovely, I had to try it," Belldandy explained. "What do you think?"

She pulled a magazine out from under the low table, opening it to the bookmarked article about a vacation resort on some distant shore. Pictures of the cuisine at the hotel restaurant were presented next to the photos of luxurious suite rooms.

A stem of delicate Chinese Lantern Lilies arched gracefully in a small vase. The silver was buffed to a high shine, and the glasses were of sparkling Bohemian crystal. The places were set with Meissen porcelain dishes as if it were no big thing.

Though the tableware in front of him paled in comparison to that of the magazine, to Keiichi, nothing could top a meal that Belldandy had cooked specially for him.

"This is fantastic. No hotel has a better breakfast than this!" Grinning from ear to ear, he stuffed a piece of bacon into his mouth.

Belldandy's lavender eyes danced at the sight of Keiichi's enjoyment. Nothing made her happier than watching him take pleasure in her cooking. His sincere words filled her with inexpressible warmth.

"That was a real feast."

Not the most delicate eater, Keiichi polished off his breakfast in nothing flat and let out a sigh of contentment. The fact that not a single drop of food remained testified to his satisfaction.

"I'll put on some tea." Belldandy began to clear the table, her lacy apron fluttering. Just then, the telephone in the hallway began to ring.

"Who could that be at this hour?" Keiichi frowned. It was unusual for the phone to ring so early in the morning.

"I'll get it." Halfway to the kitchen, Belldandy changed direction and moved toward the hall.

As she stepped out of the living room, the chill in the air told her that spring's arrival was yet to come.

The sound of the telephone grew louder as she made her way down the corridor. But despite its insistent ringing, Belldandy was unhurried as she picked up the receiver.

"Morisato residence," she said.

"Belldandy! It's me, Skuld!"

The voice on the other end conveyed an urgency even greater than the ringing phone.

* * *

It had all begun two days ago.

Then, too, the phone had rung . . . at first, Skuld had ignored it, pretending not to hear. But she was the only one home, and eventually she reluctantly picked up the receiver.

"Yeah?" she said unenthusiastically. It violated her principles, but she was willing to use the I'm-just-a-kid act if it meant dodging a telemarketer.

"Oh, *très bien*! I'm so glad someone's home"

"Peorth?"

Like Belldandy, Peorth was a Goddess First Class Type 2 Unlimited. Her extensive skills were put to use in managing the Yggdrasil system. For that reason, unless something major was happening, they didn't hear from her often.

" . . . er, what's going on?" Skuld asked hesitantly.

"Yggdrasil's in a state of emergency!"

Exactly as Skuld had feared. Of course things had to go wrong when her big sisters weren't home! She felt a wave of gloom at the unfortunate timing.

But up in Heaven, that was the furthest concern from Peorth's mind. Her explanation issued forth like a stormy tirade.

Setting aside the technical and mathematical details, the basic gist of it was that for several days, there had been a sudden epidemic of bugs in Heaven.

Skuld sat down and hugged her knees, listening to Peorth go on and on. After about twenty minutes, Peorth finally paused and Skuld managed to cut in, "but this is nothing new, right? Bugs are always popping up in Yggdrasil—so if you just launch a debugging program . . ."

"*Évidement.* We did that quite some time ago," Peorth interrupted, as if to rebuke Skuld for stating the obvious. The rising pitch of her voice betrayed her irritation. She let out a sigh. "But this is something different. Otherwise, I wouldn't be calling, *n'est pas?*"

"Something different?" Skuld stopped playing with the telephone cord and gripped the receiver with both hands. "Then the debugging program . . ."

"*Complètement inutile.* We executed the program and tried to run a delete, but to absolutely no avail. In fact, things are worse than ever."

Apparently, the problem was beginning to affect Yggdrasil's main system, a completely unprecedented situation. Skuld leapt to her feet. If things were this bad, she had to send her sisters to help as quickly as possible.

"Got it. I'll tell Belldandy and Urd right aw—"

"Never mind that. I want *you* to come."

"Huh? Me?" For a moment, this unexpected request caused Skuld's thoughts to completely freeze. Pointing toward herself and speaking slowly, she tried to confirm what Peorth had just said. "You want . . . me?"

"Yes. You."

The answer hadn't changed.

"Yeah, but . . . if it's a problem with the system, maybe Urd . . ."

Even though Skuld and Urd were both Goddesses Second Class, Skuld's qualifications were a far cry from Urd's Limited Administrator License. Besides, to be completely honest, Skuld wasn't at all eager to return to the celestial sphere overcome by chaos. Quickly, she began to make excuses, but Peorth remained adamant.

"Getting rid of these bugs is the number one priority right now. Who better to round them up than you, Skuld! Return at once!"

"Eep!"

* * *

On Earth, two days had passed since then, while in the celestial realm it had probably only been a few hours. But to Skuld, it felt like a thousand years since she'd received her sudden orders to return home.

"Belldandy, listen to me . . . I don't know what to do! I . . . I'm still a long ways away from being able to come home . . . even with my brilliant talents, we're just barely able to keep things from getting any worse . . . no matter how many times I re-calculate, the numbers keep changing! I just can't keep up!"

A flood of tearful lamentations poured out of Skuld. The fact that Belldandy listened to everything with such compassion only increased the deluge.

Once she'd had a good cry, Skuld seemed to feel somewhat better, but now her wailing turned to disgruntlement over being left to handle this job all alone. For a time, Skuld's tirade of complaints flooded forth without pause.

It was then that Belldandy noticed that Urd had sidled up to the phone and was listening in on Skuld's diatribe.

"Urd . . ." Belldandy murmurred.

"*Shh.*"

"But why am *I* the one who had to come out here? Systems administration is *Urd's* field. Shouldn't *she* be the one taking care of this?"

Skuld just happened to shift gears in her grousing with deadly timing, unaware that Urd was now at the other end of the line.

"So you know what, Belldandy? I was thinking . . . maybe you could tell Urd that she should come up here and help me restore the system."

It was an excellent proposal. The problem was, she was submitting it to the wrong party.

"She'll listen to you, Belldandy. 'Course, Urd lacks *my* prodigious talents, but a helping hand never hurts . . ."

"Oh, really? I think I'll pass!"

On the other end of the line, Skuld froze. Figuratively speaking, her temperature dropped to -273.15° C—the temperature at which even a rose is reduced to particles.

". . . U-U-Urd!!"

It was only then that Skuld realized just how deep she'd dug herself. At what point exactly had Urd picked up the phone? But the damage was already done.

"I'm sure we have nothing to worry about if we leave everything to your prodigious talents!"

Poor Skuld was unable to even move.

"Why, this should be a piece of cake for you! A walk in the park! I'm sure that if I were there, I'd only get in your way!"

Skuld was completely incapable of countering Urd's sarcasm-loaded attack.

"Give my regards to Peorth!"

Skuld's mouth was too dry to squeeze out a response.

"And have a nice day!"

Gently, Urd hung up the phone. Only the endless refrain of the impassive dial tone echoed in Skuld's ear.

* * *

"*Ah-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!* That was *too* perfect!"

Meanwhile, back at the Morisato residence, Urd doubled over with uncontrollable laughter, tears welling up in her eyes.

"Urd . . . are you sure about this?" Belldandy asked her convulsing older sister in a worried tone. But Urd was completely unconcerned.

"Oh, come on, everything's fine! You really are a worrywart, you know that? Look, if things were really that bad, Peorth would contact me directly."

It was true—even though she was a Goddess Second Class, Urd's powers were tremendous. And it wasn't for nothing that she held an Administrator Limited License—when it came to Yggdrasil's system, even Belldandy couldn't hold a candle to her.

"I suppose so, but . . ." Still somewhat concerned, Belldandy stared at the phone.

Just then, she felt a tap on her shoulder.

"Belldandy, do you really have time for this right now?" Urd asked.

Oh! Urd's prompting brought Belldandy back to the present. She had to pack Keiichi's lunch before he left . . . besides, he hadn't even finished his breakfast yet!

"Oh, dear! I was going to make Keiichi's tea . . ."

Urd watched, yawning, as Belldandy hurried back to the kitchen, moving much faster than when she'd come for the phone.

"Sheesh! The human world sure is busy, too!"

Urd gazed languidly toward the living room and slowly closed the sliding paper door to her room.

Bereft of the lustrous goddesses that had inhabited it moments earlier, the corridor was restored to its chilly silence.

Just then, a dark form wriggled.

A cloudlike shape came burbling out of the telephone that had moments earlier been connected to the celestial realm. It remained motionless for a time, as if surveying its surroundings, then leapt suddenly down to the hall floor, landing silently on its eight long, spidery legs. It rolled its big, wide eyes vacantly, and its long rabbitty ears twitched incessantly.

A "bug."

This was precisely the enemy against which Skuld was currently waging a one-girl war. In the Yggdrasil system, however, the bugs were mere data errors—but down on Earth they took the form of weird, supernatural creatures. Unfortunately, they also had the inconvenient quality of being invisible not only to the human eye, but to heavenly beings as well.

Nobody knew yet that this bug was here in the human realm.

* * *

STOP! This is the back of the book!

This manga collection is translated into English, but arranged in right-to-left reading format to maintain the artwork's visual orientation as originally drawn and published in Japan. If you've never read comics this way before, take a look at the diagram below to give yourself an idea of how to go about it. Basically, you'll be starting in the upper right-hand corner, and will read each word balloon and panel moving right-to-left. It may take a little getting used to, but you should get the hang of it very quickly. Have fun! If this is the millionth manga you've read this way, never mind. ^_^

MANGA/HUMOR

Oh My Goddess!

ああっ女神さまっ 27

THE DEMONIC ANGEL CREATED

by Hild and sanctified by Belldandy found a temporary host in Keiichi, but how long can his mortal form bear the burden? Belldandy has a notion of how to shift its presence to a more suitable host body, but Velsper may not like the transfer. Come to think of it, neither may Keiichi! Plus an exclusive preview of the upcoming *Oh My Goddess!—First End* novel by the voice of Urd, Yumi Tohma!

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